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The Magazine of Mystery and Horror

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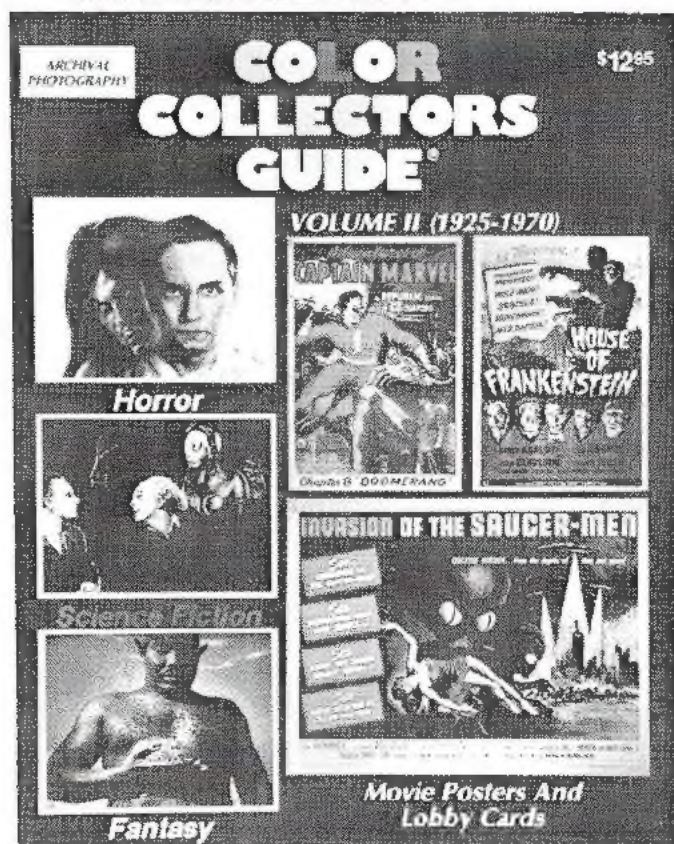
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*Beverly Garland and Richard Crane in THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE (1959)*  
*Tim Considine and Tommy Kirk*

# Scarlet Letters



So glad the issue has been well received by your readers, because that must be some consolation for being disturbed by my phone call at such an early hour!

It is always heartwarming to hear nice things, and I had a good blub here and there when I read of the esteem in which I am held by many people.

Two notes: (i) "Wait and see" was a phrase used repeatedly in speeches by Herbert Henry Asquith, First Earl of Oxford (1852-1928), who was Britain's Prime Minister from 1908 to 1916. (ii) I never say "My God" in that context. It must've been my faulty diction over the wire. "My gosh" is what I say—on occasions. (Here endeth the first lesson!)

With kindest wishes, and may God's blessing be with you always.

Peter Cushing, O.B.E.

Kent, England

Richard Valley replies: "As one of your Presidents said, 'We'll have to wait and see.' Was it one of yours, or one of ours?" That's what Peter Cushing asked me during a delightful early-morning interview—essential reading in *Scarlet Streets* #8 and #9—and, though I was able to answer a few questions having to do with Hammer films, I confess I was at a loss. (Then, again, my knowledge of politics is such that, asked to identify England's Prime Minister, I'm apt to say Paul Eddington.) The unfortunate "My God" had nothing at all to do with Mr. Cushing's diction, which is, as ever, flawless, and everything to do with a faulty cassette recorder, which rendered one or two portions of our discussion a trifle difficult to decipher. Our sincere apologies to one of filmdom's favorites and, on a personal note, my heartfelt thanks for his allowing me (telephonically) into his home.

Many thanks to you for the issue of *Scarlet Street* magazine [THANK YOU, MR. BECK, *Scarlet Street* #9]. It is a beautiful issue, full of charm and remembrances.

Thomas Beck

Miami Shores, FL

So—where have you been all my life? What a great magazine, especially for us borderline cases obsessed with defectives and horror stuff. I'm so impressed with the issue I picked up in a rather *outré* neighborhood bookstore: *Scarlet Street* #8.

The interviews with Jeremy Brett, Rebecca Eaton, and Rosalie Williams were dead on, the interviewers asking questions I would have asked myself. First rate. Please keep us panting Sherlockians informed on the further goings-on at Granada. We feel rather cut off, being in America and getting info second-hand.

My one complaint: I hope you don't begin taking advertisements for "slasher" and other ghastly types of films. That's for those more interested in gore than horror. Keep it out, and keep the publication high quality.

Elaine L. Larson

Chicago, IL

What a delight to find another issue [*Scarlet Street* #9] of your terrific magazine in the mailbox today. I especially enjoyed the articles and final interview with the late, great Joan Bennett, a lady of true class and style. As she stated, "They really don't have stars [anymore]." How true! Sadly, the glamour of Hollywood is no more, but, thankfully, through the magic of video and publications

## WANTED: MORE READERS LIKE . . .



THOMAS BECK

such as *Scarlet Street*, filmdom's glory years are preserved and treasured.

Your feature was the first time I'd heard about *THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW*. On a par with *SCARLET STREET*? Then it's a must! Is it available on video? I hope your publication will delve into the world of film noir. It is a fascinating genre worthy of your magazine's attention (and title, come to think of it).

Fredric Cooper

Torrance, CA

We'll be blackening a few reputations (in the nicest way possible) in future film noir articles. Unfortunately, *THE WOMAN IN THE WINDOW* has yet to display herself via videotape. *SCARLET STREET*, however, is available in most video stores.

Sorry to have missed your big anniversary party!! By the way, a friend of mine is such a fan of the old E.G. Robinson film *SCARLET STREET* that she was thinking of getting interest going on a remake. You never know . . .

Zacherley

New York, NY

John Zacherle, TV and radio's Cool Ghoul, will be profiled in an upcoming issue.

First, allow me to express my gratitude to *Scarlet Street* for printing my article in which I attempted to clear up the misconceptions regarding the Jack Pierce/Boris Karloff Frankenstein Monster makeup [How to Make a Frankenstein Monster, *Scarlet Street* #8]. The photos, selected by Editor Richard Valley, served beautifully to illustrate the makeup procedure. (On page 37, top left, the full extent of the cotton-and-collodion brow-bone/checkbone augmentation is visible; on page 40, top left, you can see the washer on the right electrode and the bottom corner of the headpiece glued to Karloff's neck.)

Unfortunately, it now behooves me to report that I have discovered, nay, been visited upon, by the true





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Curse of Frankenstein—which, seemingly, has nothing to do with the artificial creation of life and the disasters following such a presumptuous act.

Rather, the Curse is that it is apparently impossible to present an article detailing the Monster's makeup without errors creeping in.

On page 36, I related the oft-purported bit about the Monster's arms being so much longer than his coat sleeves because (according to Pierce's studies of Ancient Egyptian burial practices) the blood of executed criminals turned to water and flowed to the extremities, enlarging and elongating them. What I neglected to emphasize was that, though this sounds suitably creepy, it's all overdramatized nonsense. The Monster was simply supposed to have been bigger than whoever his coat came from. A cadaver's blood does not turn to water; nor does it then flow anywhere; nor does it then enlarge or elongate anything. In short: Supernatural? Perhaps. Baloney? Absolutely! I apologize for my stunning lack of clarity.

Additionally, on page 40, the article describes a metal strip on the underside of the Monster's left forearm. What I wrote was that the metal appliance was on the back of the forearm (as you can see

in the photo on page 38 of Karloff from BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN).

That out of the way, let me say that *Scarlet Street* is a wonderful, entertaining, and informative publication. Congratulations on your second anniversary and best wishes for a long and prosperous life!

Michael R. Thomas  
Belleville, NJ

My friends and I think your magazine is the best on the market. We would appreciate it if you could do some in-depth articles on the NIGHT STALKER TV series and movies, and on the Mike Hammer movies, particularly KISS ME DEADLY and THE GIRL HUNTERS. Interviews with Darren McGavin and Mickey Spillane on these subjects would be greatly welcome, also.

Martin Lee  
Los Angeles, CA

*We're working on it, we're working on it...*

Another jam-packed issue [#8], with interesting detail on some favorite old stars and films. Once again, however, I must take exception to what I think is a highly unfair assessment of one of these movies: THE VELVET VAMPIRE.

It's always a dicey prospect, accusing an artist of shallow or callous motive, as your writer [Ken Schachtman] has done with director/coscreenwriter Stephanie Rothman and her film; it leads one to wonder just how much effort he's put into understanding his subject on its own terms and in its own peculiar context. This writer wasn't even capable of seeing the connections in his own analysis—as when criticizing the picture's overly dark gallery scene and similarly dark episode in a cave (when all personalities in the film blur into one, as in a dream), seemingly reserving his energy for the occasional (not-so-) clever (and wholly unsubstantiated) potshot, instead—so I wasn't inclined to take him at his word in dealing with anyone else's work, either. Of course everyone has a right to express his or her own opinion, but when somebody has obviously not put as much thought into their willful destruction of another's work as that person put into its creation, I think something must be said in the accused's defense.

As the product of a Jewish woman director (unique in her class among the off-Hollywood—or mainstream Hollywood itself, for that matter—exploitation environment of its day), VAMPIRE immediately advertises itself as some-

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No. 5: Barbara Hale, Patrick Macnee, Jack Larson, THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED, Jeremy Brett, Edward Hardwicke, Christopher Lee, Universal vs. Hammer Films, David Suchet, THE SOLITARY CYCLIST, Narciso Ibanez Serrador, POIROT.



No. 6: CIRCUS OF HORRORS, Noel Neil, David Nelson, THE MASTER BLACKMAILER, VAMPIRE CIRCUS, George Baxt, Sidney Hayers, Erika Remberg, BATMAN, NIGHTMARE ALLEY, FREAKS, STRANGERS ON A TRAIN, GORG, BERSERK.



No. 7: Vincent Price, John Moulder-Brown, Yvette Vickers, TOMB OF LIGEIA, THE SUSSEX VAMPIRE, Joan Hickson, BLUEBEARD, BATMAN RETURNS, Elizabeth Shepherd, HOUSE OF WAX, THE RAVEN, LAURA, DRAGONWYCK.

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# Scarlet Street

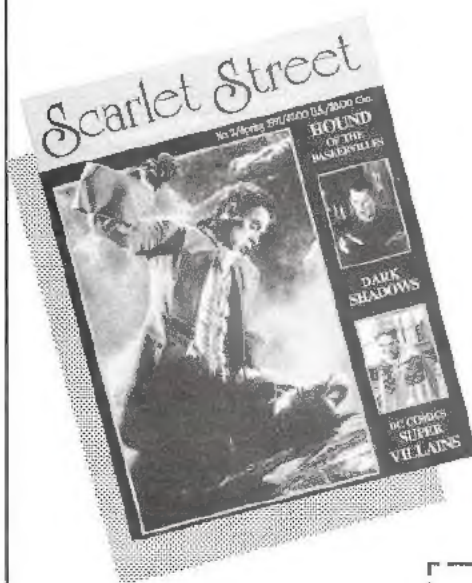
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No. 8: Peter Cushing, Rosale Williams, John Landis, BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA, FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN, DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS, SLEEPING MURDER, THE LOST BOYS.



No. 9: Richard Denning, Joan Bennett, Thomas Beck, THE BLACK SCORPION, CHARLIE CHAN AT THE OPERA, Veronica Carlson, I LOVE A MYSTERY, Peter Cushing, FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED.



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And while you're in the neighborhood, don't forget to grab **Scarlet Street # 2...** now back in print !



No. 10: Tommy Kirk, Tim Considine, Beverly Garland, THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE, THE HARDY BOYS, GIFT OF GAB, AND THEN THERE WERE NONE, THE LAST VAMPIRE, BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES, Kevin Conroy, Loren Lester, THE ELIGIBLE BACHELOR.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Arino ('76) Christopher Lee, Sybil Danning</li> <li>□ Alien ('83)</li> <li>□ Alone in the Dark ('82) Palanca, Landau &amp; Plesance</li> <li>□ Bad Taste ('88)</li> <li>□ The Best of Sex and Violence ('81) John Carnadine hosts</li> <li>□ Big Doll House ('71) Pam Grier, Jack Hill directs</li> <li>□ Black Christmas ('74) Olivia Hussey</li> <li>□ Bloodbath at the House of Death ('85) Vincent Price</li> <li>□ Bloody Moon ('81) Olivia Hussey, Jess Franco directs</li> <li>□ The Boogey Man ('80) John Carnadine</li> <li>□ Buried Alive ('79) Joe D'Amato directs</li> <li>□ Caged Heat ('74) Barbara Steele prison epic</li> <li>□ Chained Heat ('83) Linda Blair, Sybil Danning</li> <li>□ A Chinese Ghost Story ('88) Letterboxed</li> <li>□ Circus of Horrors ('59) Yvonne Monyaur Yvonne Romain</li> <li>□ Coast Guard ('88) Louis Jordan/Unsub on T-160</li> <li>□ Crawlspace ('86) Klaus Kinski</li> <li>□ Craze ('74) Jack Palance</li> <li>□ Crimson ('74) Paul Naschy</li> <li>□ The Curse of the Crimson Altar ('68) Randolph, Lee, Steele</li> <li>□ The Day After Halloween ('79)</li> <li>□ Deadly Sanctuary ('69) Jack Palance/Jess Franco</li> <li>□ Dead Pit ('89)</li> <li>□ Death Dream ('72) Bob Clark directs</li> <li>□ Death Warrant Up ('84)</li> <li>□ The Demons ('72) Jess Franco, Sex-crazed tapes</li> <li>□ Devil Fish ('84) Umberto Lenzi directs</li> <li>□ The Devil's Rain ('71) Letterboxed</li> <li>□ The Devil's Wedding Night ('79) Mark Damon, Sarah Bay</li> <li>□ The Doctor and the Devils ('83) Timothy Dalton</li> <li>□ Domusque ('78)</li> <li>□ Don't Go in the House ('80)</li> <li>□ Doomwatch ('72) Tigecore Films</li> <li>□ Door-to-Door Maniac ('61) Johnny Cash</li> <li>□ The Dawn That Dripped Blood ('81)</li> <li>□ Dr. Jekyll &amp; Mr. Hyde ('84) Letterboxed, Udo Kier</li> <li>□ Dracula Sucks ('79) Annette Haven, Jamie Gillis</li> <li>□ The Emerald Jungle ('80) Umberto Lenzi directs</li> <li>□ Encounters of the Spooky Kind II ('90) Libs. Asian horror</li> <li>□ Erotica ('81) Kitten Natividad</li> <li>□ Escape from Women's Prison ('76) Conrad Fenchel directs</li> <li>□ The Evil of Dracula ('75) Japanese horror</li> <li>□ Exorcism ('74) Paul Naschy</li> <li>□ The Face of Fu Manchu ('65) Christopher Lee</li> <li>□ Frenzy ('81) George Straker</li> <li>□ The Final Terror ('81) Daryl Hannah, Rachel Ward</li> <li>□ The First Nude Musical ('76) Cindy Williams</li> <li>□ Flesh Gordon ('72) Ugeal</li> <li>□ Frankenstein 1980 ('79) John Richardson</li> <li>□ Fulfillment ('74) Peter Walker directs</li> <li>□ The Grim Reaper ('80) Joe D'Amato directs</li> <li>□ Helltrain ('77) Jess Franco directs</li> <li>□ Hercules ('59) Letterboxed with Steve Reeves</li> <li>□ Horridol ('61) William Castle directs</li> <li>□ House of the Long Shadows ('82) Peter Walker directs</li> <li>□ House on Straw Hill ('75) Udo Kier, Linda Hayden</li> <li>□ Hundra ('84) Amazon women action</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ I Remember Mama ('72)</li> <li>□ Inferno ('80) Dario Argento directs</li> <li>□ Infra Man ('76) Chusseau Sci-Fi superhero</li> <li>□ The Innocents ('61)</li> <li>□ Invasion of the Bee Girls ('73) Victoria Vetri</li> <li>□ The Island of Lost Souls ('32) Bela Lugosi</li> <li>□ Jack the Ripper ('76) Jess Franco/Klaus Kinski</li> <li>□ Jennifer ('78) Nina Foch</li> <li>□ Just Before Dawn ('80)</li> <li>□ Killer ('90) Ultra violent Asian thriller</li> <li>□ The Lake of Dracula ('71) Toho horror</li> <li>□ Let Sleeping Corpses Lie ('74) Letterboxed, uncut</li> <li>□ Love Me Deadly ('72) Necrophilia</li> <li>□ Mad Doctor of Blood Island ('69) John Ashley</li> <li>□ Make Them Die Slowly ('80) Umberto Lenzi directs</li> <li>□ Man From Deep River ('77) Umberto Lenzi directs</li> <li>□ Marquise of the Doomed ('76) Michael Pataki directs</li> <li>□ Mark of the Devil, Part II ('72) Banned in 19 countries!</li> <li>□ Naked Super Witches of the Rio Amore ('77) Jess Franco</li> <li>□ Naked Warriors ('83) Sara Bay &amp; Pam Grier</li> <li>□ The Nightmares ('71) Brandt &amp; Brandt</li> <li>□ Nocturna ('78) Vampire disco queen Bai Borei</li> <li>□ Opera ('88) Dario Argento directs</li> <li>□ Oryg of the Dead ('65) Ed Wood &amp; Criswell</li> <li>□ OSA ('85) Apocalyptic sci-fi</li> <li>□ The Perils of Gwendolene ('84) Tanya Roberts</li> <li>□ Pieces ('81) Christopher &amp; Lynda Day George</li> <li>□ Possession ('82) uncut (UK version) Isabelle Adjani</li> <li>□ Prehistoric Women ('50)</li> <li>□ Satan's School ('88) Sybil Danning, Woody O. Williams</li> <li>□ Savage Streets ('85) Linda Blair &amp; Linnea Quigley</li> <li>□ Saragosa ('72)</li> <li>□ Schizo ('76) Peter Walker directs</li> <li>□ Schizoid ('80) Klaus Kinski</li> <li>□ The Seed ('90) Dario Argento</li> <li>□ Slaughter Hotel ('71) Klaus Kinski, Sarah Bay</li> <li>□ Slave of the Cannibal God ('78) Ursula Andress</li> <li>□ Slasher Party Massacre ('82)</li> <li>□ The Story of O ('75) Connie Clancy-uncut</li> <li>□ 38 Experiments: Love Camp ('76) Sergio Caimone directs</li> <li>□ Street Trash ('88)</li> <li>□ Superstition ('82)</li> <li>□ Sweet Sugar ('72) Phyllis Davis behind bars-uncut</li> <li>□ Tanya's Island ('80) Tanya &amp; Rick Baker's ape</li> <li>□ Theatrical of Death ('86) Christopher Lee</li> <li>□ They Served Hitler's Brain ('63)</li> <li>□ Tourist Trap ('79) Chuck Connors, Tanya Roberts</li> <li>□ Tower of London ('62) Vincent Price</li> <li>□ Trap Them &amp; Kill Them ('79) Joe D'Amato directs</li> <li>□ The Twilight People ('72) John Ashley &amp; Pam Grier</li> <li>□ Two Evil Eyes ('89) Dario Argento</li> <li>□ The Undead ('80) Roger Corman directs/Allison Hayes</li> <li>□ Unhinged ('85) Unrated version</li> <li>□ Vengeance of Fu Manchu ('69) Christopher Lee</li> <li>□ White Cannibal Queen ('79) Jess Franco</li> <li>□ The Wicker Man ('72) Christopher Lee &amp; Ingrid Pitt</li> <li>□ Zu: Warrior of the Magic Mountain ('89) Jet Li, Asian</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

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thing different, and suggests the "point of view" the writer was himself incapable of identifying. By starting her film off with a shot of an enormous crucifix far above the city her action kicks off in, and following it up with the thwarted rape of the title Powerful Woman, Rothman instantly provides a context for the action to follow: This will be a film about oppression and turning the tables; the next scene, in fact, opens with a member of another such oppressed minority, the black blues singer Jimmy Shines. (What more does any critic need?)

Perhaps this was all just happenstance to your writer (if he noticed it at all), but can he then explain the coincidence of this character's running into her WASPish prey in an art gallery (herself introduced to the pair as a collector) and then later watching their lovemaking through a mirror frame, like just such a piece of art she has similarly "acquired"? Does her projection of her own dreams into these lovers suggest anything of the auteur theory to your writer, the filmmaker investing his or her own personal concerns into a prepared subject matter? And what would he make of the fact that this distaff vampire movie also takes place mostly in the daylight, in

the desert flatlands rather than the Carpathian mountains, and with a gas station doubling for the traditional village way station?

I could go on, but all I really want to demonstrate is that, when any writer makes such a claim as to a given film's emptiness or presumes to have divined its maker's intention in committing such a vacuum to celluloid, I think it's his duty to have shown first that he has done his homework, too. We think we're so clever, us critics, when we've never had to bring in a releasable film on time, on budget, and on other people's money besides, only to contend with a team of uncredentialed know-it-alls who may have somebody else's ticket money in the palm of their hand. I make no claim for THE VELVET VAMPIRE in comparison to any other film; it obviously didn't have the budget, the actors, or probably the shooting schedule DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS (your writer's point of comparison) did; neither did it have a male name to attach to its primary credit. It stands alone, and it certainly deserves more respect than *Scarlet Street* was able to afford it.

Steven R. Johnson  
*Delirious*  
Cleveland Heights, OH

Ken Schactman replies: *Mr. Johnson seems to have confused the vocations of critic and film historian. My job, as I see it, is to discuss a picture on its merits or lack of same. The questions I have to answer are "Is this film worth the viewing? If so, why? If not, why not?" If a movie is a crashing bore, it doesn't matter whether it was directed by a Jewish woman, a male follower of Priapus, or a dolphin. It's still a bore! Mr. Johnson has every right to his politically correct world view, but the inclusion by a woman director of a feminist point of view does not necessarily make a film worthwhile. What more does a critic need? Decent dialogue and at least an attempt at some genuine acting would be a start.*

*I was offended by VELVET VAMPIRE precisely because it was a good idea wasted, which is why I compared it to DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS, where the same concept had been so brilliantly brought to life. Yes, I did comprehend the thwarted rape scene, and an actress of distinction (such as DAUGHTERS' Delphine Seyrig) could have given it style, wit, and class. As a point of interest it should be noted that the "Powerful Woman" is not new. In the "women's pic-*

*Continued on page 10*



# Frankly Scarlet



The Hardy Boys, the Alligator People, *Famous Monsters of Filmland*—and a red-and-black tugboat on the Hudson River. How's that for a seemingly incongruous laundry list of topics?

It's simple, really. Fans of flicks half-forgotten or TV shows long cancelled will understand. Readers for whom the latest Stephen King opus will never quite equal that first swing through the treetops with Tarzan will nod sympathetically. Hey, they probably have just such a grab bag tucked in some nostalgic corner of their minds, too.

Here at *Scarlet Street*, we have a staffer who can recall what neighborhood palace on what day of what year played *IT CONQUERED THE WORLD* (1956), and what happened when the film broke just as Beverly Garland wandered into that gloomy cave. He can tell you where in Sunny Cal that cave is located, and the afternoon on which that memorable moment was shot.

Others can (and will) rattle off the dates on which each mummy movie first popped up on TV's *SHOCK THEATRE* (or *NIGHTMARE* or *CHILLER THEATRE*), and what horror-host Zacherley (or Gorgon the Gruesome or Chilly Billy) was doing that night.

The brain boggles at the thought of how many otherwise sane citizens can give a full report of their activities on the day Barnabas first rose from his coffin . . . the night Kolchak first stalked *THE NIGHT STALKER* (1971) . . . the week Manhattan's *MILLION DOLLAR MOVIE* first ran *KING KONG* (1933)—all 16 times!

And to think, misguided publishers waste time putting out mags in which stars and semi-celebrities vividly recall their first sexual experiences! Understandable, I suppose, if one's first sexual experience happened to coincide with the local drive-in's double bill of *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE* and *THE RETURN OF THE FLY* (both 1959), but otherwise . . .

Alligator People! That's right; I was telling you about the Alligator People on the black-and-red tugboat!

Like I say, it's simple. For much of his life, my Dad captained a red-and-black tugboat. It wasn't always the same boat; there were quite a few over the years. Late in his career, when business on the waterfront had dried up and the luxury liner had practically joined the Edsel in the vehicular history books, Dad traveled between New York and Florida on a king-size, ocean-going tug, pulling barges and scows and doing landfill work in the Keys. But back in the 50s, when I was growing up and the harbor was alive with activity, he stuck pretty much to the Hudson River—and I would sometimes spend a weekend on the boat, learning the ropes with the deck hands, waving to the passengers on the *Queen Mary*, reading the latest adventure of the Hardy Boys or the torn, dog-eared copy of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*, the one with the shot of the girl and the alligator . . .



*Beverly Garland and scaly friend.*

Get the picture?

It's not simply what you saw, but where you were when you saw it, that lingers in the memory. It's not only what you were doing, but the clouds in the sky when you did it . . . the smell of the roses . . . the tune on the jukebox . . . even the dog in the nighttime . . .

Here at *Scarlet Street*, nostalgia is still all it's cracked up to be; fact is, it's a sizeable chunk of what goes into each hot little issue. For this issue in particular, chance—and the need to reschedule several articles—brought the Hardy Boys and the Alligator People together. The result, for me, was instantaneous—I was back on Dad's tug, reading *The Tower Treasure* and staring with wide-eyed delight at the "scary" pix in good ol' *FM*. (*FM* for Forry Ackerman followers had nothing whatsoever to do with the radio; no, not in those days.)

Lest that heavy rose tint on our glasses entirely blind us to life's little booby traps, we've got three reports from the front lines: Tommy Kirk and Tim Considine (Joe and Frank Hardy on *THE MICKEY MOUSE CLUB*) and Beverly Garland (star of—yep!—*THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE*) take a sometimes bumpy stroll down Memory Lane, pausing at the corner of Memory and Scarlet to let you, our readers, in on what it was like to find Spanish doubloons hidden in a rickety old water tower . . . what it was like to marry a two-legged reptile . . . and what it was like to work with Fred MacMurray. You'll also find Michael Mallory's charming take on Disney's two Hardy Boys serials, complete with illustrations from the original editions of the Franklin W. Dixon novels, and John Brunas' photo-filled study of *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE*, containing a few Garland quotes and 'dotes that didn't find their way into her exclusive *Scarlet Street* interview.

Of course, there's a lot more that this issue has to offer. Greg Mank (author of *Karloff and Lugosi*) brings Boris and Bela back to life in *GIFT OF GAB*. (Listen, they were always, in film after film, trying to bring someone else back to life!) Kevin Conroy and Loren Lester, the voices behind the Caped Crusaders on *BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES*, naturally have much to say (it's their job) about the hit Fox series. David Stuart Davies checks in with reviews of the latest (if not greatest) Holmes shows from Granada. And actor Richard Dempsey takes time out from his college studies to tell us what it's like to star with Brett and Hardwicke in Granada's *THE LAST VAMPIRE*.

That's only part of the picture, but, hey, we don't run a table of contents for nothin'. Besides, a considerable part of the overall image—the memories attached to these stars and their films—will have to be sketched in by you, yourselves. Have fun, *Scarlet Streeters*, and don't forget to drop by next time when—barring last-minute rescheduling, of course—Debbie Reynolds and Curtis Harrington will tell us *WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN* . . .

*Richard Valley*

P.S. Thanks to Carl Del Vecchio for the shot of Beverly and her smiling friend.



## SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 8

tures" of the 40s, Crawford, Davis, and others based their careers on her. The idea of having a vampire residing in the sunny desert is an intriguing one; I just wish it had been carried through as well as the hotel milieu in *DAUGHTERS*. (In this instance, comparison is everything, since what we have here are two versions of essentially the same concept. One worked; the other didn't.)

In reviewing a movie, I believe that the accomplishment of the director's intentions is more important than the intentions themselves. I would be doing *Scarlet Streeters* a grave injustice if I recommended a film merely to be politically correct; nor can I applaud a mere concept when that concept has not been artistically realized. *VELVET VAMPIRE* was a good idea ruined by inept direction, feeble dramatics, and inexcusable writing, and no amount of auteurist rhetoric can change these facts. No, I have never directed a movie, but, in the words of somebody or other, you don't have to be a chicken to recognize a bad egg.

I just received *Scarlet Street* #8. It's terror-iffic! The best thing to happen to a horror/sci-fi fan since *Famous*

*Monsters of Filmland*. I have only one complaint: *Scarlet Street* should be expanded to at least six issues a year!

Michael Tazcinski

Elmwood Park, NJ

We're working on it, we're working on it...

☐

About three or four months ago, WNJN [New Jersey Network] began airing old episodes of *RUMPOLE OF THE BALLEY*. They seem to be in chronological order in that they start with the retirement of his father-in-law from the law firm and continue with the introduction of Patricia Hodge's character and the birth of her child. Would you know if these are indeed the very first episodes of *RUMPOLE*? Also, exactly how many episodes were made, and were they all shown here in the States?

In addition, I've heard that Granada has filmed additional episodes not yet aired here on PBS. Do you have any information on when they will air?

One last thing: Has Jeremy Brett made any additional Holmes episodes beyond those aired last year on PBS?

Robert Buchfuhrer

New York, NY

WNJN is airing every *RUMPOLE* episode with the exception of those not yet shown on *MYSTERY*! (New *MYSTERY*! episodes are scheduled for

the Spring.) *THE MASTER BLACK-MAILER*, starring the ever-popular Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke, makes its long-awaited American debut this Spring, too.

☐

I recently purchased *Scarlet Street* and found it enjoyable and informative. It's about time that somebody decided to write a magazine dedicated to mystery/suspense and horror.

I am inquiring if any further books by Agatha Christie and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle will be done with Albert Finney as Hercule Poirot and Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes. I love to watch Joan Hickson as Miss Marple and Jeremy Brett as Holmes, and every Monday and Sunday I watch *THE AGATHA CHRISTIE HOUR* and *SHERLOCK HOLMES MYSTERIES*. Can you tell me if there are any remakes going to be done with Mr. Brett of the old Sherlock Holmes movies with Basil Rathbone? Are any Agatha Christie feature films in the making?

Victoria Ceolin

Hamilton, Ontario

David Suchet is the current incarnation of Hercule Poirot in the London Weekend Television shows still in production. The novels broadcast in the

Continued on page 12

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# A Letter from Richard Gordon

Last issue, *Scarlet Street* published a letter requesting the lowdown on Arthur Lucan, who played Old Mother Riley in a series of comedies made between 1937 and 1952. Well, who better to provide that info than the man who got Bela Lugosi his role in *OLD MOTHER RILEY MEETS THE VAMPIRE* (1952): Richard Gordon, veteran producer of such *Scarlet Faves* as *FIEND WITHOUT A FACE* (1958) and *THE HAUNTED STRANGLER* (1958). We'll have much more to say about Mr. Gordon and his films—and Mr. Gordon will have more to say, too—in a future issue of *Scarlet Street*.

\*\*\*

Congratulations on your Second Anniversary issue—a fine accomplishment and a tribute to your perseverance. May there be many more such anniversaries in the future.

Allen Kretschmar asks about "Old Mother Riley" in *SCARLET LETTERS* [*Scarlet Street* #9]. "Old Mother Riley and her daughter Kitty" were a popular music-hall act long before they entered films. Arthur Lucan's wife played daughter Kitty. Professionally, she called herself Kitty McShane.

*OLD MOTHER RILEY MEETS THE VAMPIRE* was the last film in the series and the only one in which the "old lady" appeared without her daughter. Lucan's marriage was by then in trouble and he would no longer appear with her. In fact, at his instigation, producer George Minter had her barred from appearing at the studio during the filming.

I brought Bela Lugosi to the picture when a stage revival tour of *DRACULA* that I arranged for him in 1951 flopped and closed before reaching the West End of London. Bela and his wife were stranded without money, and I was able to persuade George Minter to do the picture. A screenplay was whipped up almost overnight, the gimmick of the switched luggage at the beginning of the story having been stolen directly from *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN*. The picture was made too quickly and too cheaply and never achieved any box-office success, despite a title change to *VAMPIRE OVER LONDON* in U.S.A. It eventually wound up on late-night television and video as *MY SON, THE VAMPIRE*. Lugosi was paid the equivalent

of \$5,000 for his services and used the money to return to America with his wife.

An interesting fact about Arthur Lucan was that he always applied his costume and makeup at home and arrived in full "drag" at the studio, leaving the same way at the end of the day. Nobody ever saw him as he looked in real life. Consequently, he was an English celebrity who could move freely in his private life without fear of recognition. I will always remember introducing Bela Lugosi to Arthur Lucan on the first day's shooting at Walton Studios. It took Bela a long time to



*Bela Lugosi tries to discuss vampirism with Mother Riley (Arthur Lucan), who does his best to skirt the issue. Photo courtesy of Richard Bojarski.*

make up his mind whether he was playing opposite an actor or an actress.

I particularly enjoyed Richard Denning's recollections of filming *THE BLACK SCORPION* in Mexico. This wonderful guy was the star of my first foray into production in England in 1956, which was a (very) low-budget thriller called *REQUIEM FOR A REDHEAD*, from a novel by Lindsay Hardy. Carole Matthews costarred, and when the film was completed, it was rented *ASSIGNMENT REDHEAD* for U.K. release; I called it *MILLION DOLLAR MANHUNT* for distribution in U.S.A. Denning had made several successful films for my brother Alex at AIP in Hollywood, and Alex was able to persuade him to do my picture. One of the nicest actors with whom I ever worked.

The interview with Thomas Beck is fascinating and long overdue, but your caption for the still from *THANK YOU, MR. MOTO* at the top of page 26 contains an error. The young lady in the still is Jayne Regan, not Pauline Frederick, who had been a major star in the silent era and was then in her 50s. Ms. Frederick played the Chinese lady Madame Chung in *THANK YOU, MR. MOTO* and died within a year of completion of this film.

Joan Bennett's reminiscences of her long career are lovely, but she does injustice to her work in early silents and fails to mention that, in 1929, when she costarred with Ronald Colman in *BULLDOG DRUMMOND*, she also costarred with George Arliss in the sound remake of *DISRAELI*.

No one has ever said a mean word about Peter Cushing and for good reason. A great actor, a great human being. I only had the privilege of being associated with him once, in the production of my film *ISLAND OF TERROR*, which we scheduled between two of his Hammer assignments, although I later was responsible for bringing him together with Ken Wiederhorn, for whom he starred in *SHOCK WAVES*.

Peter is quite justified in his enthusiasm for *CASH ON DEMAND*, a minor classic that could have been a major box-office success if it had "got away" from Hammer and been accepted as a mainstream picture on its own merit. Instead, it was thrown away as part of a Hammer double bill. Jim Knäusch, in writing about Peter Cushing's time spent in Hollywood (in his review of *A CHUMP AT OXFORD*), neglects to mention several other American films in which the actor appeared before returning to England. They are detailed in the excellent new book by Tom Johnson and Deborah Del Vecchio: *Peter Cushing: The Gentle Man of Horror*, reference to which is made elsewhere in your magazine.

I also recommend Basil Rathbone's *In and Out of Character*, the reissue of which is reviewed by you. I hoped to make a film with Rathbone once, but unfortunately it was in the period after he gave up playing Sherlock Holmes, when he was looking for a vehicle to take him back to England. My offer was a horror film, *THE DREAM MACHINE*, in which he would have played a variation of "the mad scientist." He politely refused and,

*Continued on page 97*





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You wouldn't just miss this year's selection of seldom seen mysteries from the movies golden age, including **THE LONE WOLF TAKES A CHANCE** (1941) with Warren William, Film Noir rarities **SO DARK THE NIGHT** (1946 - directed by Joseph H. Lewis of **GUN CRAZY** fame) and **BLONDE ICE** (1948 - scripted by cult favorite Edgar G. Ulmer), the rare Universal thriller **THE WESTLAND CASE** (1937), and Bela Lugosi in **THE RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE**. You'd also miss some great comedies, like **CRAZY HOUSE** (1943) with Olsen and Johnson and **THERE GOES MY HEART** (1938) with Fredric March, silent films like Harold Lloyd in **GIRL SHY** (1924) and Joseph von Sternberg's **THE LAST COMMAND** (1928) and many, many more features, shorts and cartoons.

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## SCARLET LETTERS

*Continued from page 10*

States include **THE MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR AT STYLES**, **THE ABC MURDERS**, and **PERIL AT END HOUSE**. Still to cross the Atlantic: **DEATH IN THE CLOUDS** and **MURDER IN MESOPOTAMIA**. Joan Hickson recently appeared in **THE MIRROR CRACK'D**, making her the only actress to star in television versions of every full length Miss Marple mystery. The production will eventually appear on A&E (stripped, as is usual with this channel, of approximately seven minutes per hour). No theatrical films based on Christie are currently in the works. Granada hopes to continue their Holmes series beyond **THE LAST VAMPIRE** (based on "The Sussex Vampire") and **THE ELIGIBLE BACHELOR** (retitled from "The Noble Bachelor"), both of which aired last winter in England. While the present plan is to produce pastiches instead of the original Conan Doyle classics, it is doubtful that these will be adapted from the Basil Rathbone films of the 40s (which were, in several cases, updated reworkings of the Canon).

I was greatly pleased with the excellence of *Scarlet Streets* #8 and #9, even more so considering that Peter Cushing is my favorite actor. Putting him on

the cover of #9 was icing on the cake. I'm only 23, but I think I'll be devoted to your magazine for the rest of my life.

Reading the review of **A CHUMP AT OXFORD** on page 74 of #9, it seems to me that a couple of American film appearances by Peter Cushing were not mentioned. I believe Cushing performed in the 1940 RKO picture **LADDIE**, and he also appeared in some short subjects made at MGM at about that time. (I must admit I have never seen any of these, but Cushing's portrayals in these productions have been documented in other reference books.) Please understand that this does not detract from my enjoyment of your magazine.

I also must express my admiration for Michael Mallory's article in #8 concerning Bela Lugosi and Lon Chaney, Jr.'s roles as the Monster and Dracula. I thought I was the only one who considered their performances underrated.

Keep up the good work.

Dan Day  
South Bend, IN

My attention was immediately captured by the article extolling the fine career of Joan Bennett. When I was young and impressionable (I'm still the latter!) I was very much aware of the Bennett sisters, although I don't recall anything about Barbara's career, if any, except that she committed suicide in 1958 on

the fifth attempt. In the early days it was the blonde Constance who got, and demanded, all the attention. A bit of a bitch, I guess, was Connie. She was interested only in money, and made lots of it.

I never paid much attention to Joan until 1938, when she donned a black wig. That did me in: I fell in love with her. (I have since read that originally Joan had dark hair before she went into the movies.)

When I saw the shot of Joan and Dan Duryea under the lamppost in 1945, I had to chuckle, because that was the very year, having just recently been discharged from the Air Force, I met Dan Duryea's sister in Greenwich Village. When I innocently asked about Dan, I got a sizzling reply: "My brother Dan is a no-good, rotten, son of a bitch! Period!"

I decided not to try to extend that part of our conversation, especially as I knew she was in a rather pissy mood, anyway. She owned a bar there in the Village and the two cops on the beat had just been in for their free drinks. She got hot every time it happened, even though she knew it was a universal custom and that if you failed to observe it the boys in blue could make things very difficult for you.

Anyway, that was my link to Joan Bennett. Rather tenuous, eh? I now



have to wonder what Joan Bennett thought of Dan Duryea? Will we ever know?

Graham Davies Wilcox  
Craryville, NY

☐

Great magazine you have here. I'm hoping your knowledgeable staff can help me out with something that's been bothering me for a number of years. It concerns the original KING KONG.

I first saw this film during the early 70s on CFCF 12 from Montreal. During the climactic confrontation between Kong and the biplanes, there was a long white pole (a flagpole, I would imagine) rising up from the center of the tower. After setting Ann Darrow down, Kong hangs onto this pole with one hand and swats at the planes with the other.

I saw this version of the film two or three times over the next few years. It struck me as odd, because all the stills I had seen in magazines like *Famous Monsters* showed Kong straddling a small metal stud, leaving both hands free. At the time I figured the promotional stills and the film itself had been done separately, so I didn't give it much thought.

Then in January of 1981 I saw a different version. This time Kong reaches the top of the Empire State Building and there is no pole. The metal stud I had seen in all those publicity photos was there. As in the photos, Kong

straddles the metal stud and swats at the planes with both hands. You could have knocked me over with a feather.

Obviously, this scene was filmed twice, but what I want to know is why. In addition, I've read scads of books and magazines over the years pertaining to this film, and not once have I seen a mention of this alternate ending.

I have to wonder if the fact that it was a Canadian TV station might have something to do with it. Could the Canadian print have been different from the American one? This might explain why no one else seems to have heard of this.

Thanks for your attention, and if you can help me out here I will be eternally grateful.

Matthew Bradshaw  
11 Bullard Drive  
Hooksett, NH 03106

*The 20th century has had quite a few flagpole sitters, but, try as we might, we have not been able to come up with any evidence that King Kong should be counted among them. (We've racked our brains on this, which hasn't answered your question, but has made the office a much neater place.) For the record, it was originally intended that the Empire State be used as a mooring place for dirigibles; likely, any object crowning the (then) world's tallest building was there for that purpose and not as a pole from which to fly the Stars and Stripes*

*forever. It would be surprising if KING KONG (1933) had an alternate ending. Stop-motion animation, which gave life to the King of Skull Island, is a long, arduous process, and creating a second sequence would have required months of work for animator Willis O'Brien. Still, stranger facts have come to light, so we'll pass along your request to a panel of true experts—namely, our readers. If they can't effectively dig up the dirt on Kong's last stand, then nobody can.*

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Presents

## NEW RELEASES! and UPGRADES!

Here are 21 new releases to help usher in 1993, including seven titles in a new category that you've been begging for us to carry for years, Spaghetti Westerns! We've also included a list of titles whose video masters have been upgraded in the recent past. They're offered here for a limited time only at a special discount price.

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## NEW RELEASES! NEW RELEASES! NEW RELEASES!

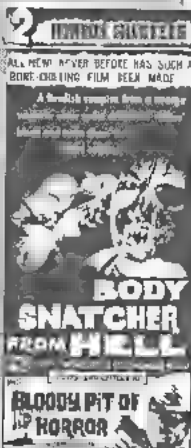
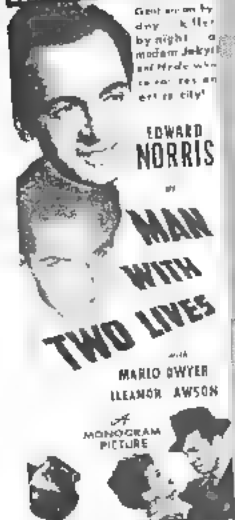
Here are 21 new releases, most of which are on video for the first time. All have been mastered from 16mm or 35mm prints.

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PLEASE NOTE! This sale price listed on the following page does not apply to new releases

### STRANGE! SHOCKING!



**A PLACE CALLED GLORY** (1966) Lex Barker, Pierre Brice, Marianne Koch. The setting is Glory City. Barker helps the local townsfolk battle a gang of ruthless, bloodthirsty outlaws. Color. WOOD

**BEYOND THE LAW** (1967) Lee Van Cleef, Lionel Sandler, Gordon Mitchell, Antonio Sabato. Lee starts out as a thief, eventually becomes sheriff. He battles his former outlaw buddy Mitchell over the theft of shipment of Silver. Good last 'g' spaghetti. Color. WOOD

**THE GRAND DUEL** (1973) Lee Van Cleef, Peter O'Brien, Jess Hahn, Horst Frank. More top of the line spaghetti thrills as Lee plays a mysterious gunman who plays the protector of a young, gun-slinging outlaw who's falsely accused of murder. Color. WOOD

### HORROR

**THE MAN WITH TWO LIVES** (1942) Edward Norris, Mario Dwyer, Addison Richards. On video at long last! A well-made Monogram horror thriller about a wealthy young man who's killed in an auto accident, then restored to life at the stroke of midnight by a mad scientist. A moment later is restored, a murderous gangster is executed, his soul entering the young man's body. Look out! Much in the spirit of *BLACK FRIDAY*. Nice bib scenes. A must for all collectors. H154

**BEAST OF MOROCCO** (1966) aka *HAND OF NIGHT*. William Sylvester, Aliza Gur, Terence De Marney. An interesting British vampire film about a Moroccan vampire princess who tries to seduce a noted archeologist. His girlfriend is abducted by the vampire's servant. H185

**BODY SNATCHER FROM HELL** (1968) aka *GOKE*. Hideo Kato, Teruo Yoshida. When a Japanese airliner crashes in a remote area, its survivors find themselves menaced by horrible, blob-like creatures from outer space. They slither into their victims' skulls, changing them into bloodthirsty vampires. Available courtesy of Headliner Productions. H186

**MURDER MANSION** (1972) Andre Hesiro, Annela Gade, Evelyn Stewart. A young couple, lost in the fog, stumble upon an eerie cemetery next to a creepy old mansion. They enter the mansion and face unspeakable horror. H187

**SHRIEK OF THE MUTILATED** (1974) Alan Brock, Jennifer Stock, Tawn Ellis, Darcy Brown, Michael Harris. What is the grisly hidden secret of the murdering, white yell? A group of college students try to find out when they venture to a mysterious island. Low budget, but at times chillingly effective. A Shostakovitch type music score much like that used in *THE BRAIN EATERS*. H188



### EXPLOITATION

**SLAVES IN BONDAGE** (1937) Louis Andre, Donald Reed, Wheeler Oakman, Florence Dudley. First time on video! Long unseen, this exploitation classic can now take its place along side *PEEPER MADNESS* and *ASSASSIN OF YOUTH* as one of the great camp films of the 30s. Young, innocent country girls are lured into the big city and recruited into a life of ill repute. Spankings, catfights, alcohol abuse, etc...this film has something for everybody. A must. X068



**THE SINISTER URGE** (1980) Kenne Duncan, James Moore, Jean Fontaine, Carl Anthony, Dino Fantini, Conrad Brooks. Directed by Edward G. Wood Jr. Ed's campy expose of the smut picture racket looks of his usual warped, twisted, innuendo genius. Police try to track down a sex killer and put an end to the porno business that inspired his hideous crime. Ed himself appears briefly in a light scene. Available exclusively from Sinister Cinema. X073



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## Exploitation continued

**ONE TOO MANY** (1951 aka **THE IMPORTANT STORY OF ALCOHOLISM**) Ruth Warwick, Richard Travis, Victor Kilian, Onslow Stevens, Ginger Prince, Lyle Talbot. What a cast! Probably the biggest budgeted exploitation film ever made. Story depicts the evils of alcoholism and its tragic effects on various people. Hokey campy but slick. Produced by the one and only, Roger Babbs. X069

**FIVE MINUTES TO LOVE** (1963) Rue McClanahan, Paul Leder, Will Gregory. What a find! McClanahan, one of TV's three **GOLDEN GIRLS** (the sleazy one), plays a sleazy, young, incredibly good looking hussey named "Poochie," the girl from the shack. Rue's a knockout in his schlocker that appears to be her first film. X071

**HOLLYWOOD AFTER DARK** (1955) Anthony Vorno, Rue McClanahan. Not released theatrically until 1956. Rue plays a sleazy young sashy trying to make it in Hollywood, any way she can. Pure exploitation schlock. X073

**THE NAKED FLAME** (1958) Dennis O'Keefe, Linda Bennett, Kasey Rogers. Dennis was heavy on the sauce when he portrayed an investigator in a strange town inhabited by weird, religious fanatics. After he arrives, the womenfolk take their clothes off in protest, the ugly heavy-set ones only strip down to their underwear. Murder and rape are featured in this pulpit, beyond belief filarity. Rated "R" X072

LEE VAN CLEEVE



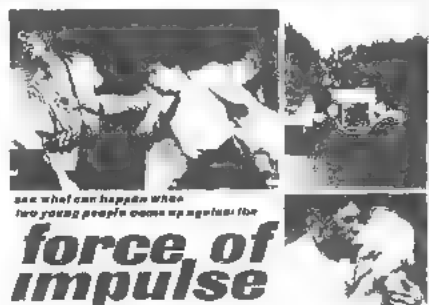
LE GRAND DUEL



## JUVENILE SCHLOCK

**TEENAGE** (1944) Herbert Hayes, Wheeler Oakman, Johnny Duncan. First time on video! This low budget ratty asks the eternal question, "what's wrong with modern youth?" As the aus pull it, "juvenile delinquency has passed the 'mushy' stage." Pure camp JS26

**MARRIED TOO YOUNG** (1952) Harold Lloyd Jr., Anthony Dexter, Jena Lund, Manarita Hu. A forgotten Ed Wood Film. Scripted in part (though not credited in the opening titles) by Ed. High school sweethearts go married on the sly then find the burdens of real life too tough. Trouble comes when they get mixed up in a hot car racket. Available exclusively from Sinister Cinema JS28



**FORCE OF IMPULSE** (1960) J. Carroll Nash, Robert Alda, Tony Anthony, Christina Crawford, Jody Mores, Lionel Hampton. An extremely impressive cast weaves its way through this story about hot rods, teen love, robbery, parental problems, and more. A well produced 10 schlocker on video for the first time JS27

**THE HAND OF NIGHT** (1960) J. Carroll Nash, Robert Alda, Tony Anthony, Christina Crawford, Jody Mores, Lionel Hampton. An extremely impressive cast weaves its way through this story about hot rods, teen love, robbery, parental problems, and more. A well produced 10 schlocker on video for the first time JS27



# UPGRADES! UPGRADES! UPGRADES! UPGRADES!

Listed below are over 70 films whose video masters have been upgraded in their format. They are on sale through May 31. **IMPORTANT!** The date of upgrade is listed with each title. Please take note!

All upgrades listed below are on sale for **\$12.95 each**  
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## SCIENCE FICTION

- FOUR SIDED TRIANGLE** (1953) 11/10/92 S024
- HALF HUMAN** (1956) This Japanese tale of a tribe of monstrous yet is now mastered from a beautiful 35mm print 12/1/92 S094
- INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN** (1956) 7/1/92 S043
- INCREDIBLE PETRIFIED WORLD** (1957) 11/1/92 S048
- COSMIC MONSTERS** (1958) 6/8/92 S101
- TERROR IS A MAN** (1959) 1/25/93 S055
- ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES** (1959) 12/20/91 S053
- THE KILLER SHREWS** (1959) 11/1/91 S058
- THE GIANT GILA MONSTER** (1957) 1/2/91 S059
- THE MONSTER** (1959) 1/28/93 S061
- ATOM AGE VAMPIRE** (1963) Our previous master had several minutes missing. Our new print is complete, with video quality greatly improved. 12/13/92 S072
- BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN** (1963) 6/14/92 S081
- ALPHAVILLE** (1965) 1/30/90 S087
- PLANET OF BLOOD** (1966) 12/26/91 S167
- GAMMERA THE INVINCIBLE** (1966) 1/29/93 S088
- THE LOVE FACTOR** (1969) 7/23/91 S146

## HORROR

- CONDEMNED TO LIVE** (1935) 12/28/91 X009
- REVOLT OF THE ZOMBIES** (1936) 9/27/92 H011
- THE APE** (1940) 1/28/93 K007
- THE MAD MONSTER** (1943) 10/1/92 S063
- THE APE MAN** (1943) 12/2/92 L025
- FOG ISLAND** (1945) 12/28/92 A068
- SCARED TO DEATH** (1947) A big improvement over our previous master with richer looking director and much better video definition. 1/30/93 L028
- DIABOLIQUE** (1955) Our new master blows our old one out of the water. A classic horror thriller. 5/1/92 H033
- THE SCREAMING SKULL** (1955) 9/27/92 H039
- BEAST FROM HAUNTED CAVE** (1959) 1/6/92 H043
- MANIA** (1959) aka **FLESH AND THE FIENDS & THE FRENCH** (1963) Probably the best movie about body snatching ever made. Video definition and contrast is much nicer than previously available copies. 11/24/92 H042
- HANDS OF ORLAC** (1960) There were originally two different versions of varying lengths of this Chris Lee Thriller. Our previous master was the shorter version. Our new master is over ten minutes longer and the print quality is simply stunning. 1/10/92 H147
- BLACK SUNDAY** (1960) Greatly improved. 3/1/93 H106
- THE MAGIC SWORD** (1961) 10/1/92 H151
- TERROR OF DR. HICHOCK** (1962) 5/1/91 BS03
- DUNGEON OF HORROR** (1962) aka **DUNGEONS OF HORROR** 1/31/93 H071

**THE GHOST** (1953) The definition and color composition is much much better. From a Technicolor 35mm print. 8/15/92 BS04

- CASTLE OF BLOOD** (1956) 12/13/90 H111
- NIGHTMARE CASTLE** (1956) Previous master was quite grainy. Our new master is a big improvement. 5/1/91 BS06
- DIABOLICAL DR. Z** (1955) 1/27/93 H087
- KILL BABY, KILL** (1956) 5/23/91 H087
- SATANIK** (1966) aka **SATANIC** Jacul. Better color and much better definition. 1/25/92 H090
- WIG OF THE SPIDER** (1970) Our old print was greenish, full of splices, and riddled with scratches. This new print is far superior. 6/26/92 H113
- DR. JEKYLL VS. THE WEREWOLF** (1971) 1/24/93 H094
- FRANKENSTEIN'S CASTLE OF FREAKS** (1973) in our new master it's easy to see better contrast, color and definition. 6/1/92 H148

## SWORD AND SANDAL

- MAGIC VOYAGE OF SINBAD** (1957) This interesting Russian fantasy represents one of the biggest upgrades of all the titles listed here. 9/15/92 F006
- HERO THE GREAT** (1960) Previously in black and white, now in color. 1/6/92 S535
- THE MONGOLS** (1960) A big, big improvement in both color and video definition. 12/1/92 S553
- HERCULES IN THE HAUNTED WORLD** (1961) 10/1/92 CL03
- HERCULES AND THE CAPTIVE WOMEN** (1961) 1/24/92 S502
- GOLIATH AND THE SINS OF BABYLON** (1963) 1/24/93 S536
- HERCULES AGAINST THE MOON MEN** (1964) 12/31/91 S518

## JUVENILE SCHLOCK

- NOT TOO YOUNG** (1952) 12/12/92 JS01
- TEENAGE WOLFPACK** (1957) 1/15/93 JS04
- GIRL IN LOVERS LANE** (1958) 12/16/92 JS04
- HIGH SCHOOL CAESAR** (1960) 6/2/92 JS09
- DATE BAIT** (1960) Our previous master of this German J.D. schlocker was very poor. We were going to drop it from our catalog until we came into possession of an original 35mm print. Now it's gorgeous! 5/29/92 JS08

## EXPLOITATION

- JAIL BAIT** (1954) 9/27/92 X022
- SWAMP WOMEN** (1958) 1/15/90 X025
- ISLAND OF LOST GIRLS** (1973) Color and video definition show definite improvements. 9/16/92 X043

## TRAILERS OF TERROR

- HOUSE OF HAMMER**, vol. one If you bought any of our early trailer volumes a few years back, you might have been disappointed. However, if you bought any of the newer volumes from the past three years you've seen a tremendous improvement. With most trailers now coming from 35mm elements. This and the other trailer volumes listed here are now like those of recent vintage with lots of trailers, snack bar ads, promos, etc. 5/1/91 TT13
- CLASSIC HORROR TRAILERS**, vol. one 12/1/91 TT01
- CLASSIC SCI-FI TRAILERS**, vol. one 3/23/91 TT06
- CLASSIC SCI-FI TRAILERS**, vol. two 4/15/91 TT07

## JUNGLE THRILLS

- THE GODS OF SHARK REEF** (1956) 7/7/90 J038
- JOURNEY TO THE LOST CITY** (1958) Attention! Attention! Debra Paget's famous (and very erotic) dance sequence, which was missing from most 16mm prints of this film, has now been restored. This new master also boasts improved color and definition. 19/93 J039

## MYSTERY-SUSPENSE-FILM NOIR

- THE SHADOW STRIKES** (1937) 10/0/92 M025
- HOLLYWOOD STADIUM MYSTERY** (1938) 4/24/90 M039
- CANDLES AT NINE** (1941) 5/1/91 M059
- STRANGE ILLUSION** (1945) 8/2/92 M170
- FEAR IN THE NIGHT** (1947) Before Kelley's dream sequence at the beginning of the film, which was missing from our previous master, has now been restored. 3/1/90 M071
- JIGSAW** (1949) 1/21/93 M126
- THE HIDDEN ROOM** (1949) 3/1/90 M089

## FORGOTTEN HORRORS

- THE MIDNIGHT WARNING** (1932) 12/23/90 H047
- TOMBSTONE CANYON** (1932) 9/27/92 W001
- THE MONSTER WALKS** (1932) 1/2/92 H112
- ONE FRIGHTENED NIGHT** (1935) 12/23/90 H124
- DEATH FROM A DISTANCE** (1936) 12/23/92 H132
- ROQUES TAVERN** (1936) This old dark house horror thriller looks so much better now. From a beautiful 16mm original print. 12/4/91 H133

## SILENT THRILLS

- KOSFERATH** (1922) 1/20/93 S109
- METROPOLIS** (1926) 12/1/90 S116
- CAT AND THE CANARY** (1927) 1/25/93 S119



# ANIMATED

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# TALK



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Following two successful sneak previews last September, **BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES** settled into its regular weekday afternoon slot on the Fox network. The half hour series owes more in style and content to the Tim Burton films (1989's **BATMAN** and 1992's **BATMAN RETURNS**) than it does to the campy TV series of the 1960s, but it's far from a small-screen rip-off of those theatrical megahits—for many Batfans, **BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES** is better than the two Burton films put together.

**BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES** stars the heroic voices of Kevin Conroy and Loren Lester as Batman and Robin; Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., as butler Alfred Pennyworth; Bob Hastings as Commissioner James Gordon; Robert Costanzo as Detective Harvey Bullock; Ingrid Olui as Officer Renee Montoya; Brock Peters as Lucius Fox, and Diana Muldaur as Dr. Leslie Thompkins.

On the other side of the law (and the far side of humanity) are Mark Hamill as the Joker, Paul Williams as the Penguin, Adrienne Barbeau as the Catwoman, John Glover as the Riddler, Richard Moll as Two-Face, Diane Pershing as Poison Ivy, Roddy McDowell as the Mad Hatter, Aron Kincaid as Killer Croc, and Michael Ansara as Mr. Freeze.

Ed Asner, Treat Williams, Lloyd Bochner, Marilu Henner, Robby Benson, Ed Begley, Jr., Denny Dillon, and Harry Hamlin are among those who have lent their dulcet (and often otherwise) tones to the citizens of Gotham.

The show combines limited animation, in which part of an object remains stationary, with full animation. "For exam-

ple," explains Bruce Timm, one of **BATMAN**'s three producers, "if a character is speaking, full animation might be used for his face and arms, while limited is being used on the rest of his body."

The dark, somber tone of the series derives from producer Eric Radomski's decision to use black paper instead of the commonly-used white for the background art. This provides the Dark Knight with a grim, foreboding environment in which to stalk his bizarre gallery of villains.

"I did a couple of treatments on black paper," remembers the former **TINY TOONS** artist, "and everyone liked it. They thought it was really cool. At the same time, they were leery because they thought, 'Well, we can't do this. This isn't something that's been done before.' They had every reason in the world to not want to do it. They thought it would be too dark and that it would show a lot of dirt. We just had to hold our course. Beat 'em up a bit. Everyone eventually bought it. The overseas studios had the same problem, because it was a different way of thinking as far as production went, but everyone ended up buying it and interpreting the style as best they could. In the long run, I think they're glad we stuck with it, because it gives **BATMAN** a completely different look."

Radomski, Timm, and **BATMAN**'s third producer, Alan Bennett (who worked previously on Disney's **DUCK TALES**), make for an enterprising tag team. "We all work together," claims Radomski. "Bruce and I developed the series, the style and design and direction. Alan

*Continued on page 19*

by Sean Farrell and Drew Sullivan



# He's Batman

## Kevin Conroy

Interviewed by Richard Valley

**Scarlet Street:** Is this your first experience with doing the voice for an animated cartoon?

**Kevin Conroy:** Yeah, it is. I've done voice-overs commercially, but never an animated voice. So I just went in and took a shot at it, and gave them the sound they wanted. They leave it up to the actors' imaginations, really, and I just went with the idea of the Dark Knight, with a very dark and mysterious sound; a husky, dark sound.

**SS:** What adjustments must you make in your acting style, when you perform something in which you can't rely on facial expressions?



**KC:** Interestingly enough, they try to steer away from traditional animation sounds for BATMAN. That's why they cast a lot of people who don't traditionally do animation, because they want a more natural sound. We really act out the scenes in the room. They get eight or nine actors—however many are in that episode—and we basically give regular performances. They cast a lot of people like Harry Hamlin, Michael York, Ed Asner, and Mark Hamill; you know, people who have really strong TV and film careers. They bring reality to it, rather than people who specialize in voice-overs, who might tend to do more of a traditional "cartoony" sound.

**SS:** So it's almost as if you were recording a radio drama?

**KC:** Exactly. We all have our little cubicles with our microphones, but we're all in the same room. There's a lot of interplay, a lot of interaction and playfulness. It's fun; it's like being a kid. Although you feel the responsibility to do it right, you also feel a freedom to have a lot of fun with it. One thing they've really let me do with Batman is get a sense of humor into a lot of his delivery, a lot of really wry stuff. And to go for the real drama, the heavy dramatic stuff: about his parents and things like that.

**SS:** Several episodes make reference to the brutal deaths of Bruce Wayne's parents. The writers have managed to find a way to dramatize it without showing the actual murders.

**KC:** It's interesting, there was some question as to whether the show was going to be too dark for kids. They decided to go with the more realistic version of the Dark Knight, before the 60s TV series made it sort of simplistic. I'm not an expert, but from what I understand, the parents' death played a prominent role in the comics. He's haunted by it; it's really what motivates him entirely. The kids that I've spoken to—and I get approached a lot by kids; I talk to them a



Kevin Conroy

lot about it—they love that quality. They love the darkness, and the fact that we go into the parents' story line. Yet, the show's been really good about not being gory, and not showing death, that kind of thing. I'm amazed at how they've handled it.

**SS:** It's really impressive. Some of the animation is just incredible.

**KC:** The word that comes to mind when I describe it is sophisticated. It's such a sophisticated animated series: they've gone for a very high standard on every level. When I saw the first one, I said, "My God, the score is fantastic!" It's a rich, symphonic score for a cartoon, but that is in keeping with the style: the rich colors, the expensive graphics, going for real drama in the acting. And the complexity of the story lines—they don't go for simple cartoony stories. Kids today are so much more sophisticated, they wouldn't be satisfied with less.

**SS:** It hooks the adults that way, too.

**KC:** My friends, whose kids are hooked on the show, all say they watch it with the kids.

**SS:** The writers have taken some villains who were never particularly great characters and improved upon them. Characters such as Poison Ivy...

**KC:** Aren't they beautiful? I guess that goes with having to come up with 65 episodes for one season and, hopefully, 30 or 40 for the second season.

**SS:** Are there any episodes that you're particularly happy with?

**KC:** PERCHANCE TO DREAM, because I got to do so many voices. There was Batman, there was the dream Batman, there was his father, and there was Bruce Wayne. You have to do variations on the same voice, so it's believable.

Continued on page 99



Loren Lester

**Loren Lester:** A funny thing happened to me recently. I went to buy a CD player and all the salesmen—guys in their 30s, 40s—were standing around watching BATMAN. One of them said he never misses it, and he was, you know, no kid. *Scarlet Street: This isn't your first experience doing a voice for a cartoon series, is it?*

**LL:** Oh, no; I've been doing voice-overs since I was 16—for, I guess, about 16 years.

**SS:** What are some of your other shows?

**LL:** Most recently, I was one of the New Kids on the Block. They were on the road doing concerts; they didn't have time to do a cartoon series. Just before that, I did DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH, a sci-fi series in which I played Rick Gordon, the son of Flash Gordon. That not only turned out to be a financial success, but I also met my wife through that show.

**SS:** Was there much competition for the part of Robin?

**LL:** Oh, yes. I had two callbacks. I initially auditioned, and they had me back, and they had me back again. Yeah, it was pretty stiff.

**SS:** When the show was in the planning stages, there was talk about whether or not to include the character

**LL:** Well, I'll tell you how it all took place. Robin was in the very first episode, and then they made some cast changes—they recast Alfred the butler; they recast the Joker; I think because of commitments the actors had. After we did the first episode, I didn't hear anything for months, and they said they were working on the scripts; they were working on the bible. And I thought, "Well, you know, it's kind of a dead issue." Then the next thing I knew, I did 20 episodes in a row! So, at

some point, they made the decision to go with Robin.

**SS:** Have you a favorite episode?

**LL:** There's a two-part episode called ROBIN'S RECKONING. Robin's the key player in that script. They're thinking of running it in prime time. They're very happy with it.

**SS:** Does it have to do with his origin?

**LL:** The show deals a bit with that, but mostly it's about a big loggerhead that the two characters reach: Batman is still treating Robin like an immature college kid, and Robin decides to take the initiative and try to solve a crime himself. It causes a tremendous rift between them, which is reconciled in the second part. It's very dramatic.

**SS:** How is the soundtrack recorded for the series? Does everyone perform the script at once?

**LL:** Right. Everyone at once, except in some cases. You know, they use a lot of stars for the guest spots, and sometimes they have prior commitments. But, for the most part, it's everybody in the room at once, or as many people as they can get at once.

**SS:** And then what?

**LL:** Well, first we do a read-through, and the director, Andrea Romano, describes the actions to us. For example, she says "You're in a helicopter, and it's about to crash into the building, so I need a sound of fear." We then take notes—or I do; I don't know if other people do. I take notes about what's happening, because when we record it, and I know that particular line is coming up; I know that I'm looking at a building.

**SS:** Are you able to make line changes, or is it pretty much the script as is?

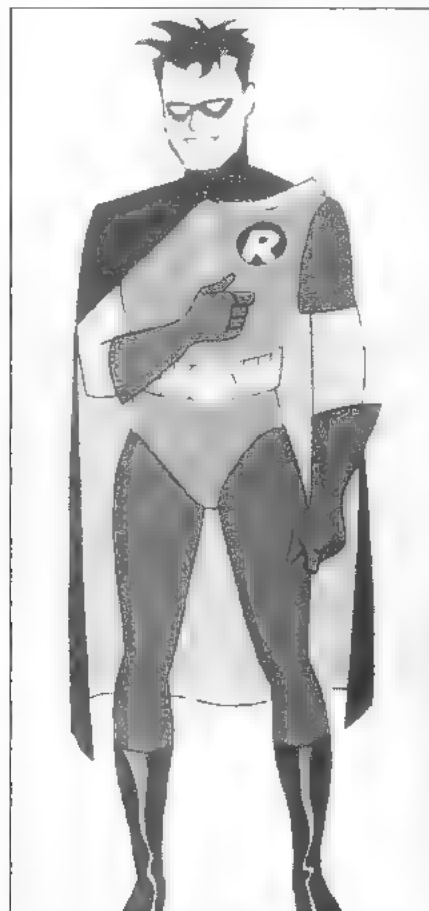
**LL:** Oh, they're very open to suggestions. It happens all the time, particularly if something isn't logical, or quite so well put. I mean, the scripts have been great; I've done a lot of animation, and these are the best scripts I've ever seen. On other shows, the scripts were basically the good guy versus the villain, over and over and over again. BATMAN's scripts are psycho-

logical; they're dramatic; there's a lot of tension explored. But, occasionally, if you say to the director, "I'd like to say this or that," they are very open to it. Occasionally, they'll say, "Well, no, that doesn't quite work, because we have to do this or that with the animation."

**SS:** Are there any cast members you particularly enjoy working with?

**LL:** I really enjoy working with Efrem Zimbalist, Jr. Paul Williams, as the Penguin, is wonderful; he's a real kick. Also Mark Hamill as the Joker—and I also enjoyed working with the original Joker, Tim Curry.

*Continued on page 99*



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*Continued from page 16*

was brought in as the story editor/producer. He basically supervises the story editors, the writing end of it. Bruce and I supervise all our animation directors, but we have influence over the scripts."

Recently, *Scarlet Street* stretched to Gotham City, where we spoke with Eric Radomski about **BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES**. The following are excerpts from that interview:

**Scarlet Street:** *Is it the customary practice for producers of animated series to be artists themselves?*

**Eric Radomski:** It's pretty rare, really. At one time, in the 40s and 50s, when Warner Brothers was at its height, with Bugs Bunny and the Road Runner, it was different. Chuck Jones was an artist in his own right, so was Fritz Freleng. Then the industry changed, and it was pretty much writer controlled. It's rare now days for an artist to be the captain of the ship. I think it's important that you have a visual strength in your series. Otherwise, it's just a really good radio show.

**SS:** *There have been so many different approaches to the character of Batman over the years. How was the style and tone of your series reached?*

**ER:** I think the Dark Knight version—the vigilante, the brooding Batman—is the only version that really holds to the mystery of the character. How should I put it? It's just the cooler version of Batman. (Laughs) He's fallible, like anyone else, and yet he's mysterious. He's a hero for everybody, because everyone can relate to him. He's a protector. He's the guy you wish you had with you when your car breaks down. (Laughs) I think it was just a natural direction to take, especially since we wanted the show to be dramatic and action-packed.

**SS:** *Is it difficult to portray the violence of Gotham City without ever actually killing anyone?*

**ER:** It's not difficult. There's a lot of ways to cheat it, and suggest it. I don't think we ever wanted to show any graphic violence, other than Batman taking down somebody who deserves it. It goes back to the old days of filmmaking . . .

**SS:** *They had to find a way around it, because of censorship.*

**ER:** We worked closely with the network on broadcast standards and practices, and we agreed, for the most part, with what they were saying. They were concerned about handguns and bloody fights, and that's understandable. It can be just as strong without it. But, at times, it got to the point of being ridiculous. A character would fall from a building, and we always had to show that he landed in a tree or a river. To land in a tree, that's always disappointing. (Laughs)

**SS:** *How do you choose the actors?*

**ER:** Originally, it must have been 300 auditions for the main cast—Batman, Gordon, Bullock, Alfred, Robin, Harvey Dent, and the Joker. That was just a process of elimination; we knew what we had in mind; we just had to hear them. For the incidental characters, Andrea Romano, our casting director, put the word out. It's a union position, so we literally put it out to anybody, and anyone who's interested gets the same wage. It's just a matter of them being interested and us looking for a particular voice. Sometimes we need something specific, but other times it's just someone who's unique. Outside of the Joker, most of the voices are pretty much as the actor speaks. We try not to have them go over the top, or push it. For Batman, everyone came in doing Clint Eastwood, and Kevin Conroy was the only one who used his own voice. Bruce Timm and I just looked at each other and said, "God, this is the guy!"

**SS:** *You chose to go with an older Robin; Dick Grayson is a college student . . .*

**ER:** It gave us an out; he wouldn't have to be with Batman all the time. To tell you the truth, I don't think any of us were crazy about using Dick Grayson—Robin—in the series; he kind of weakened the mysterious character of the vigilante Batman. We played Robin a bit stronger in our series.

**SS:** *It's a combination of characters, in that you have Dick Grayson wearing the costume worn by the comic's new Robin.*

**ER:** Right. The design makes him a bit tougher. That was solely to make him fit within our series, to make him more of an acceptable character. He's not so slick and proper; he's got an edge to him.

**SS:** *Do you flash back to Robin's origin?*

**ER:** We have a two-part show called **ROBIN'S RECKONING**. It focuses, in the first part, on the death of his parents, the Flying Graysons. It's probably one of our most dramatic shows. It'll definitely choke you up when he's got to leave the circus and Bruce Wayne takes him under his wing. It's one of the episodes in which less is more. The death is staged in such a way that we follow the trapeze and see the rope fraying. As the rope exits the screen with the parents,



*Harley Quinn takes aim as the Joker draws Batman into her line of fire. More than most animated Batcharacters, Harley harkens to the 60s series, in which each villain had a female accomplice.*

you get a shot of Dick Grayson, and when we cut back there's dead silence: no music, no sound effects, or anything. The rope swings back with its end broken. Then we sting it with music, and you hear the crowds just kind of freak, and that's all. It just kicks you in the gut. It's a real dramatic moment.

**SS:** *Have you any favorite episodes?*

**ER:** **ROBIN'S RECKONING** is probably my favorite dramatic show. And, of course, there's the episode that I directed [**ALMOST GOT 'EM**]. It's got the villains sitting in a nightclub, and they're discussing Batman. Paul Dini wrote that. He's got a real good sense of comedy from **TINY TOONS**, and he can write some real dramatic stuff, too. He wrote the Mr. Freeze story, **HEART OFFICE**. He's one of our better guys.

**SS:** *Have you produced any more episodes with Mr. Freeze?*

**ER:** Not for the first season. Everyone here has been saying, "Next season we gotta do another Mr. Freeze."



Next issue, *Scarlet Street* returns to the mean streets of Gotham City for a little Battalk with Paul Williams and Bob Hastings. Holy . . . oops, wrong show!

# GIFT OF GAB

## THE MYSTERY OF THE LOST KARLOFF AND LUGOSI MOVIE

### BY GREGORY WILLIAM MANK

*When Mr. Universal promises an 'all-star' picture, he means an 'ALL-STAR' picture . . .*

—The L. A. Examiner, reviewing  
GIFT OF GAB, September 21, 1934

It sounded too good to be true—and it was.

For years, disciples of "Horror's Golden Age" had salivated at the sight of stills from Universal's GIFT OF GAB, for this 1934 musical curio featured (in "cameos") KARLOFF, in top hat, black cape, and fright wig, merrily face-making as a character called the Phantom, and Bela LUGOSI in black smoking jacket, scarf, and rakish cap, looking for all the world like a Transylvanian pimp.

Ramsey Campbell has written a wonderful 1989 horror novel, *Ancient Images*, about a fictitious lost film Karloff and Lugosi had made in England in the late 30s. But GIFT OF GAB is the real lost movie of the Boris-and-Bela canon; the second of eight tandem movies, filmed in the halcyon summer of 1934, after their first glorious teaming in Edgar G. Ulmer's THE BLACK CAT.

No one could get hold of an existing print.

Then, in the summer of 1989, a well-meaning Bela Lugosi zealot called me late one evening with a stunner: A national mail-order video company supposedly was offering GIFT OF GAB for sale. We blissfully imagined all the tantalizing treats it would offer.

The stylistics of the director, Karl Freund, legendary Bohemian cinematographer of DER GOLEM (1920), THE SPIDERS (1920), METROPOLIS (1926), DRACULA (1931), MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE (1932), and director of THE MUMMY (1932) and MAD LOVE (1935) . . .

The star, Edmund Lowe, of CHANDU THE MAGICIAN (1932) and THE GREAT IMPERSONATION (1935) . . .

The leading lady, Gloria Stuart, beautiful blonde of THE OLD DARK HOUSE (1932), SECRET OF THE BLUE ROOM (1933), and THE INVISIBLE MAN (1933) . . .

And, best of all, there were those "cameos" from the immortal KARLOFF and Bela LUGOSI (as Universal's publicity department hyped them in those days of yore).

Thanking the tipster profusely, I called the video company first thing next morning. Yes indeed, chirped a saleslady, they had GIFT OF GAB—and, after taking down my charge-card information, she personally would send it out pronto. Only mornings later, the UPS truck pulled up. It was the video. I began tearing open the package, planning the snacks, the drinks, the ambience I would create for the great screening to take place that night. . .

And behold, in my hands, my new video: GIFT OF GRAB—a documentary about football ends

The same chirping saleslady assured me that it was only a temporary boo-boo; the computer showed that they did, indeed, have GIFT OF GAB. Send back GIFT OF GRAB and get GIFT OF GAB.

GRAB went back.

GAB never arrived.

After long delays and broken promises, a refund finally came with the sad confession: There was no GIFT OF GAB.

\*\*\*

In an age when Universal restores Little Maria's splash into the lake in FRANKENSTEIN (1931), when MGM revives a Gene Kelly musical number cut from the release print of SINGIN' IN THE RAIN (1952), when a dealer finally offers the James Whale production of JOURNEY'S END (1930) taped from British television, many film historians scoff at the claim that any film is lost. Some even hint that Lon Chaney's ever elusive LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT (1927) is out there somewhere



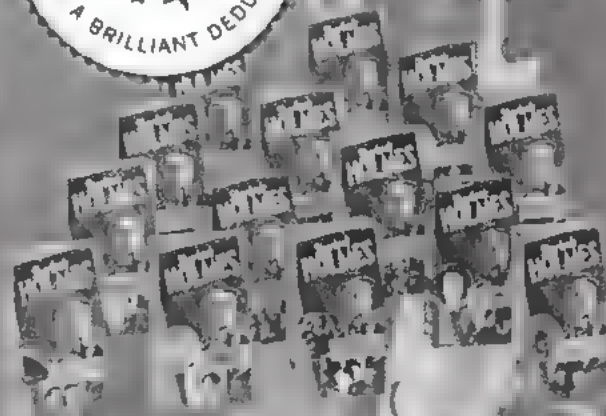
*Boris and Bela on the set of 1934's GIFT OF GAB*



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**Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi first teamed in 1934's *THE BLACK CAT*. Here, they confront all-purpose 30s hero David Manners, who, true to his name, is too polite to put up much of a fuss.**

If this is true, Universal's *GIFT OF GAB* is fooling everybody. Few films have ever shrouded themselves in so much mystery; very few mainstream movies of the 30s have been so maddeningly impossible to locate. The film has never been on television. It was not included in the Museum of Modern Art's giant Universal retrospective of the late 70s. Professional video searchers who promise to deliver the impossible never deliver *GIFT OF GAB*. Even Universal's production reports on the movie present their own mysteries.

Cynics wonder why anybody wants it in the first place. Universal apparently blueprinted a musical that would be a sleek, sexy showgirl of a movie—then vainly and desperately padded “her” (“it”) with guest appearances by such Universal “icons” as Paul Lukas, Chester Morris, Roger Pryor, June Knight, Douglass Montgomery, and Binnie Barnes—as well as Boris and Bela. They all cavort early in *GIFT OF GAB* in a radio melodrama spoof described by *Variety* as “the hokiest of hoke mellerettes,” and then disappear, leaving us at the mercy of Lowe, a bevy of radio stars, and the “hit tunes.”

Still, the historic thrill of seeing the lost KARLOFF and BELA LUGOSI film, even with the beloved stars in such brief, campy “hoke,” is irresistible to many fans. Here follows a retrospective on the forsaken movie—with the Quixotic hope that some fanatic out there, maybe, will reveal to the world his or her sacredly-guarded print of *GIFT OF GAB*.

\* \* \*

There was at MGM in 1933 a horror that I produced called *MEET THE BARON* . . . MGM had decided to capitalize on the popularity of radio stars . . . I made the picture with a loathing for it, and it was a terrible flop. I learned then what I should have learned long before: never to tackle a picture for which I had no enthusiasm . . .

—David O. Selznick

David O. Selznick might have loathed the concept of radio stars on the big screen, but it all sounded like fun to “Junior” Laemmle. In the summer of 1934, Universal's tiny, 26-year-old “Crown Prince” personally produced *GIFT OF GAB*. The story: A fast talking radio star named Gabney exasperates his long-

suffering fiancée, Barbara, with his madcap and zany ideas before wedding her in the climax. The appeal: a chance to entice audiences with as many radio celebrities as Universal City could attract.

Laemmle blueprinted production. The story was by Jerry Wald (who later became a prolific Warner Brothers screenwriter and producer) and Philip G. Epstein (who, with his twin brother, Julius, and Howard Koch, later won an Oscar for 1942's *CASABLANCA*); the screenplay was by Rian James (who actually supervised production). James had directed Fox's 1933 *BEST OF ENEMIES*; his “Original Author” credits would include such films as Warner Bros.' *CROONER* (1932) and 20th Century Fox's *DOWN ARGENTINE WAY* (1940), and his “Screenwriter” credits ultimately featured such titles as 1938's *SUBMARINE PATROL* (directed by John Ford) and 1939's *THE GORILLA* (with the Ritz Brothers, Lugosi, and Lionel Atwill), both for 20th Century Fox. With a grab bag of popular songs of the day, *GIFT OF GAB* received a budget of \$230,000 (\$46,000 of which was studio overhead) and a shooting schedule of 18 days.

Universal signed Karl Freund to direct. The great, 300-lb. Bohemian cinematographer had made his directorial bow with *THE MUMMY*. Freund has been remembered as many things: “a wretched, big fat man” (by Frances Drake, whom he directed in MGM's *MAD LOVE*); “an absolute bastard” (Hume Cronyn, who acted in MGM's 1943 *THE SEVENTH CROSS*, for which Freund was cinematographer) and “a monster,” “a sadist,” and “a pig” (by Zita Johann, leading lady of *THE MUMMY*). Somehow, this wretched/fat/absolute bastard/monster/sadist/pig enjoyed the Hollywood sobriquet of “Papa.” The man was a genius, and his fascination with cinematography (and sadism toward actors) eventually led him back behind the camera, where he won an Oscar for 1937's *THE GOOD EARTH*. In the 1950s, Freund became Lucille Ball's cinematographer and supervisor of the *Desilu* product; he died in May 1969, after mellowing (in the words of writer Bill Warren, who saw him often) into a “great big teddy bear.”

Freund's salary presents our first mystery of *GIFT OF GAB*. Universal's production estimate of July 11, 1934 (completed nine days after the movie began shooting) sets Freund's fee at \$3,200. Pencilled in the margin, however, is a new and fatter figure: \$10,208. A salary adjustment for the film? Apparently not; the film's final cost sheet, dated June 15, 1935, tallies Freund's final fee as \$4,666.68. A bookkeeping mystery.

For leading man, Universal engaged Edmund Lowe, who played Gabney for a “flat” fee of \$20,000—quite a hefty sum for a Universal film, and more than Karloff and Lugosi together received for *THE BLACK CAT*.

For the leading-lady role of Barbara Kelton, Universal called Gloria Stuart, their beautiful blonde star. Stuart even got a song to sing: “Don't Let This Waltz Mean Goodbye.” The production estimate sets her for three weeks' work at \$384.61 per week: total, \$1,153.83. Yet here is another mystery: \$4,284.55 is scribbled beside her name on the estimate sheet, which seems far more fair a fee than the original figure.

Alice White, as Margot, was the third celebrity to receive a salary adjustment: from a three-week deal at \$576.95 per week (total \$1,730.85) to a scribbled \$5,000. Could these have been under-the-table raises? If so, how did they come about? Angry agents? Rebellious talents? A mass storming of Junior Laemmle's office?



As for the remaining players, comic actor Victor Moore played Trivers, landing a four-week \$2,500-per-week deal; Hugh O'Connell, fresh from the Broadway hit *THE MILKY WAY*, acted Patsy, on a three-week, \$700-per-week offer; and Douglas Fowley, as Mack, was assured of receiving \$110 for each of his two weeks on the film. One week's work was afforded Edwin Maxwell as Norton (\$600) and Sterling Holloway as Eddie (\$750).

Then came the "Radio Artists," as Universal's production estimate hailed them. Here they are, in order of fee:

1. *Phil Baker*. The comic/accordionist was then starring in his own radio show, originally called *THE ARMOUR JESTER*, which had debuted on the Blue Network in March 1933; later he became host of the popular quiz show *TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT*. Baker performed the song "I Ain't Gonna Sin No More" with the Downey Sisters, making so little impact in the film that *Variety* piqued that his contribution shouldn't be mentioned; still, he took home \$10,000.

2. *Ruth Etting*. She was the former Ziegfeld Follies chanteuse whose later marriage to gangster Moses "The Gimp" Snyder became the basis for the 1955 Doris Day/James Cagney musical *LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME*. Etting appeared in what looked like Jean Harlow's wig from *RED HEADED WOMAN* (1932), sang two songs—"Talkin' to Myself" and "Tomorrow Who Cares?"—and collected \$7,000.

3. *Ethel Waters*. The great black belter belted her own version of "I Ain't Gonna Sin No More." Waters was then playing in the Broadway show *AS THOUSANDS CHEER*, so Universal shot her bit in New York City—and paid her \$2,500.

4. *Gene Austin*. This vocalist later was a regular on CBS's *THE*

*JOE PENNER SHOW*. He sang "Blue Sky Avenue" with Candy & Coco (whose names do not appear on Universal's production estimate) and was paid \$2,250.

5. *Gus Arnheim*. The popular orchestra leader, based at Hollywood's Cocoanut Grove, was paid \$1,200 to appear in *GIFT OF GAB* with his orchestra.

6. *The Beale Street Boys*. Described by *Variety* as "dusky" and "Mills Brotherish," the Beale Street Boys got \$1,000 for singing "Trivers' Livers, I Love You" and (again) "I Ain't Gonna Sin No More."

7. *The Downey Sisters*. They warbled with Phil Baker on "I Ain't Gonna Sin No More" and were paid \$375.

8. *Winnie Shaw*. The lady who popularized the song "The Lady In Red" received \$250 for *GIFT OF GAB*, billed as a cabaret singer. No reports on the film mention what she performed in the movie.

9. *Leighton Noble*. Another popular orchestra leader of the day, Noble got \$250 for lending his presence to this hodgepodge.

10. *Graham McNamee*. The veteran radio announcer for such stars as Rudy Vallee and Ed Wynn showed up for \$225.

Somewhere along the line, Universal decided to showcase its star constellation in this opus, as part of the radio melodrama spoof. The production estimate lists Boris Karloff as a guest star for a flat fee of \$500. Bela Lugosi's fee was even flatter: \$250, the same loose change that Henry Armetta was to pick up for playing a janitor. Binnie Barnes, new Universal starlet from England, was to receive \$200 for her appearance, which she made in a maid's costume. It must have been some time later that Universal added Chester Morris, Douglass Montgomery, Roger Pryor, Paul Lukas, and June Knight (who also sang

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Bela Lugosi with Chester Morris, Roger Pryor, and Binnie Barnes in *GIFT OF GAB*'s radio melodrama spoof.

"Somebody Looks Good To Me" in another part of the movie) to the skit: Their names do not appear on the studio's original production estimate.

Yet another mystery of *GIFT OF GAB*: Many reference books list the Three Stooges as appearing in the film, which has set many Stooges devotees on a mad chase for it—but Moe, Larry, and Curley are not in this movie. Rather, Universal set loose a bogus Three Stooges: "Pintz" (Sid Walker, who was to receive \$250 for the film), "Mintz" (Skins Miller, who was set for \$200), and "Blintz" (Jack Harling, who also was to get \$200). All the U.S.A. needed then, in the depths of the Depres-

*The cast and director of the "mellerette." Back row: Bela Lugosi, Chester Morris, Douglass Montgomery, June Knight, Binnie Barnes, and director Karl Freund. Center: Unidentified, Boris Karloff, and Roger Pryor. Dead on the floor: Paul Lukas.*



sion and with Hitler on the rise in Europe, was a fraudulent Three Stooges, but Universal shamelessly obliged.

So, with the obese, obstreperous "Papa" Freund, smarmy Edmund Lowe, lovely Gloria Stuart, a bevy of underpaid radio "artists" apparently desperate for movie exposure, the pseudo-Stooges, and KARLOFF and Bela LUGOSI, *GIFT OF GAB* began shooting Monday, July 2, 1934.

\*\*\*

Music! Laughter! Romance! Thrills! Adventure! And thirty stars of screen, stage and radio! A show that has no equal!

—from Universal's  
*GIFT OF GAB* pressbook

What was the story? Denis Gifford's excellent 1973 book *Karloff: The Man, The Monster, The Movies* (Curtis, 1973) provided this synopsis:

Philip Gabney, a bombastic and loquacious young man, talks himself into the position of commentator on Horace Trivers' radio program. He falls in love with Barbara, the chief of programs, but lets his success go to his head. After he fakes an interview with a pilot who, unknown to him, has been killed, Gabney is sacked. He seeks solace in drink, but Barbara gives him back his confidence and persuades him to attempt a radio report on a transport plane which has crashed in an inaccessible area. He succeeds by broadcasting while descending in a parachute, and wins back his job.

As for the all-star "mellerette," it's a spoof of radio murder mysteries, featuring Karloff as the Phantom, in his black top hat and cape and scraggly hair, and Bela Lugosi as the Apache, in a costume reminiscent of his Fernando, the sexy Spanish Apache of his 1922 New York play, *THE RED POPPY*. Also in the skit: Paul Lukas as the corpse (who turns out not to be a corpse at all), June Knight as the corpse's sweetheart, Chester Morris and Roger Pryor as detectives, Douglass Montgomery as an insurance agent, and Binnie Barnes as a maid. Also reportedly appearing was a black cat proclaimed by Universal to be the very same feline who had slinked through Karloff and Lugosi's *THE BLACK CAT* of a few months earlier. Perhaps the cat's presence explained the \$75 allotted in the budget for Ranch and Live Stock.

One gets the distinct impression that Bela, feeling a bit of clout, decided himself to dress in his Fernando duds, perhaps to remind audiences of his pre-*DRACULA* matinée-idol days. But the film hardly gives him a chance; his big moment in *GIFT OF GAB* only shows Bela, in a closet, holding a gun and asking, "What time is it?"

In 1993, *GIFT OF GAB*'s Gloria Stuart remembered the redoubtable "Papa" Freund affectionately, and told me: "Freund was very pleasant to work for—he was a darling! He told a wonderful story about when he was an apprentice cameraman in Europe—I think he worked for UFA. They were doing a Swiss movie up in the mountains, and he and the cameraman took the camera up to





*A photographic rarity: Bela Lugosi, who did not count Boris Karloff among the people he most admired, smiles benignly at his rival for the horror-king crown. Boris returns the sentiment.*

the top of the mountain, filmed all day, and realized, at the end, that they didn't have any film in the camera!" She was not so enthusiastic about the self-centered Edmund Lowe, summing up her experience with Lowe in two words: "I suffered."

Stuart did have a consolation on the picture: She was in love with writer Arthur Sheekman, who made (according to *Variety*) "a gag entrance and exit" in *GIFT OF GAB*. In fact, Universal, in a barefaced stab at publicity and good press relations, invited a gaggle of L.A. journalists and writers to appear in the film: columnists Sidney Skolsky, Radie Harris, and Jimmie Starr; critics Phil Scheur, Edwin Schallert, and Jerry Hoffman; and many more. Of course, most (if not all) of their footage ended up on the cutting-room floor. A New York crew even shot a cameo of Alexander Woolcott, who did survive the final cut, and, in the words of the *New York Times*, "confides to the camera his anecdote of the drunk and why he called the human fly a sissy."

Eventually, it all got ridiculous. Bill, the head waiter at Hollywood's Brown Derby Restaurant, appeared as himself; Producer Rian James gave his wife, Diane Corday, a bit . . .

At any rate, it was soon over. *GIFT OF GAB* was completed on Tuesday, July 24, 1934: three days over schedule. Karloff took sanctuary at the Mexican style farmhouse, pool, and gardens he had just purchased high in Coldwater Canyon. Lugosi took refuge at his red-brick fortress atop one of the Hollywood Hills. And Gloria Stuart celebrated in a big way: five days after the picture "wrapped," she wed Arthur Sheekman in Caliente.

The final cost of *GIFT OF GAB* was \$251,433.79: \$21,433.79 over budget. Even with the aforementioned songs,

plus the tunes "Walkin' on Air," "What a Wonderful Day," and "Gift of Gab" (as well as a rendition of the ever-popular "Tiger Rag"), the running time of *GIFT OF GAB* was only 70 minutes—which points an accusing finger at the threadbare plot. In fact, even part of the 70 minutes was a cheat: A football sequence was lifted out of Universal's 1933 *SATURDAY'S MILLIONS* featuring Johnny Mack Brown. There was at least one cut, in addition to the journalists: a gag opening, in which midget Billy Barty played baby Gabney "spieling" at his parents. *GIFT OF GAB* also managed to employ two future celebrities, Dennis O'Keefe and Dave O'Brien, as extras in a dance sequence.

On Thursday, September 20, 1934, *GIFT OF GAB* premiered at Hollywood's Pantages Theatre. Jerry Hoffman, who had appeared in the film, was disappointed to find himself unglimsable in the movie, good-naturedly theorizing that the footage of himself and his fellow journalists had been cut and was being transformed "into banjo pics." Hoffman wrote in the *L. A. Examiner*

*GIFT OF GAB* was made primarily for entertainment. It succeeds in being just that. If the story wavers uncertainly between being a dramatic comedy and a parade of radio specialties no one should really take it to heart. . . . Paul Lukas, Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Roger Pryor, Bunnie Barnes and several others lend the weight of their names and personalities in a scene . . .

*Continued on page 100*

# Better Holmes and Watson

## The Granada Series Reviewed

**THE NORWOOD BUILDER**  
Adaptation: Richard Harris  
Direction: Ken Grieve

*During the first week or so we had no callers, and I had begun to think that my companion was as friendless a man as I was myself. Presently, however, I found that he had many acquaintances, and those in the most different classes of society. There was one little sal-low, rat-faced, dark-eyed fellow, who was introduced to me as Mr. Lestrade, and who came three or four times in a single week.*

—A Study in Scarlet

Is it any wonder that Inspector G. Lestrade of Scotland Yard was, by and large, testy with Mr. Sherlock Holmes of 221B Baker Street? The Great Detective's biographer and friend, Dr. John Hamish

Watson, was not exactly sensitive when he penned those words (through the medium of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle) in the very first Sherlock Holmes story, published in 1887. Nor did he show much consideration when, later in the same tale, he used the term "lean and ferret-like" to describe the poor man.

There may well have been an initial touch of jealousy on Watson's part—after all, the Scotland Yarder's acquaintance with Holmes pre-dated Watson's—but the good doctor never really let up on Lestrade. As late as 1902's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, he was referring to the inspector as "a small, wiry, bulldog of a man." (Perhaps I do Watson an injustice; conceivably he thought "bulldog" an evolutionary step up from "ferret.")

Lestrade appeared in more stories (12 in all) than Tobias Gregson, Athelney Jones, Stanley Hopkins, Alec MacDonald, or any of the other members of London's official police force. That Dr. Doyle, if not Dr. Watson, had a fondness for the character is evidenced by the fact



Jeremy Brett

that he saw fit to drag Lestrade into the final chapters of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, the first Holmes story published after a 10-year drought (if "drought" is the word to use for an event precipitated by a plunge into a waterfall). On the other hand, the author was never fond enough of Lestrade to grant him a first name, a fate the inspector shared with dear old Mrs. Hudson and scruffy young Wiggins of the Baker Street Irregulars. (For his part, Billy had to make do with "the page" as a surname.)

G. Lestrade is also the Yard man of choice for the writers of the many pastiches that build on (and sometimes rip off) Conan Doyle's Victorian milieu. A random sampling of the titles in which he sniffs out crime includes Adrian Conan Doyle and John Dickson Carr's *The Exploits of Sherlock Holmes* (1954), Nicholas Meyer's *The West End Horror* (1976), Richard L. Boyer's *The Giant Rat of Sumatra* (1976), Loren D. Estleman's *Sherlock Holmes vs. Dracula* (1978), and David Stuart Davies' *The Tangled Skein* (1992). M. J. Trow has written an entire batch of irreverent mysteries, beginning with 1985's *The Supreme Adventure of Inspector Lestrade*, that have as their protagonist the "bulldog/ferret" himself. The author delights in puns and outrageous jokes; the earliest novels in the series seem designed solely to bump off the rest of Conan Doyle's characters, Sherlock Holmes included. (For reasons best known to Trow, Lestrade's first name is given as Sholto, an appellation obviously pinched from the eccentric Sholto clan in 1890's *The Sign of Four*.)

As they did with Dr. Watson, the movies have contributed tremendously to the perceived view of Inspector Lestrade



ABOVE: Lestrade of the Yard arrived on the Granada scene in 1985's *THE NORWOOD BUILDER*. Played to perfection by Colin Jeavons, the character has since made five additional appearances. NEXT PAGE: London's most famous address (well, perhaps second most famous) and two of its residents: Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson (Jeremy Brett and David Burke).







*Inspector Lestrade (Colin Jeavons) arrests the unhappy John Hector McFarlane (Matthew Solon), making him unhappier still.*

as not a ferret, not a bulldog, but a horse's ass. In the series of 12 mysteries produced by Universal in the 1940s and starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce as the Baker Street duo, the inspector popped up repeatedly in the person of actor Dennis Hoey. (The character was absent from *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* and *THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*, the two Rathbone/Bruce films made by 20th Century Fox in 1939.) Neither small nor wiry, Hoey was actually a bit taller than Rathbone and played Lestrade as a first-class boob, a necessary step if he was going to glow dimmer than Bruce's faithful but none-too-bright Watson. (It should be pointed out that Hoey, like Bruce, was endearing in his role.) Far better suited to the part was Frank Finlay, who turned up in the two cinematic lugs-of-war between Holmes and Jack the Ripper (1965's *A STUDY IN TERROR* and 1979's *MURDER BY DECREE*).

Lestrade has long been a fixture of Sherlockian television. Among the players who have tackled the role are Bill Owen in a 1951 British series starring A.A. Wheatley as Holmes, Archie Duncan in the 1954 series starring Ronald Howard, Peter Madden in the 1965 series starring Douglas Wilmer, William Lucas in the 1968 series starring Peter Cushing, Alan Caillou in 1972's *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*, Hubert Rees in 1982's *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*, Ronald Lacey in 1983's —you guessed it—*THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*, and Simon

Callow (braying much like Pinocchio's pal Lampwick) in 1991's *THE CRUCIFER OF BLOOD*.

Then, of course, there's Mr. Colin Jeavons.

■ ■ ■

"Could it be that for once Lestrade is on the right track?" asks Sherlock Holmes (Jeremy Brett) with an understandable lack of conviction. Has ol' rat-face actually arrested the guilty man for the brutal murder of Jonas Oldacre (Jonathan Adams), whose charred remains have been found in a fire behind his home? Has the victim's somber housekeeper, Mrs. Lexington (Rosalie Crutchley), really provided Lestrade with the bloody evidence needed to mark the case closed? The crime is complex, the stakes nothing less than the hangman's noose for the Great Detective's callow young client, but fear not—by the end of *THE NORWOOD BUILDER*, the first Granada episode to feature Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's best known Scotland Yard inspector, the stately Holmes, with not a little help from the ever-vigilant Watson (David Burke), has unravelled a ruthless puzzle and freed the self-described "unhappy John Hector Mc-

Farlane" (Matthew Solon) from the grim threat of the gallows.

Adams, Crutchley, and Solon are well-cast in their roles, as are Helen Ryan as McFarlane's mother, Anthony Langdon as a tramp, and series regular Rosalie Williams as Mrs. Hudson. (It should be noted that the unhappy John Hector of Conan Doyle's short story is described therein as "flaxen-haired and handsome, in a washed-out negative fashion," which Solon, not entirely flatteringly, manages to be, but that the Jonas Oldacre of the original is "a strange little ferret-like man," which was, for Granada, perhaps one ferret too many.)

At this point in the game, Brett and Burke are completely at ease as our heroes, though the scene with the Master Sleuth in disguise is, as is often the case, a disappointment. Here, the problem lies in the fact that the change of identity is virtually nonexistent. True, Holmes needn't effect an elaborate makeup when, as here, the man he seeks to fool has never seen him as his true self, but Brett's characterization of a simpleminded tramp lacks interest and is virtually repeated in the later *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER*, when at least one character—the Milverton maid, Agnes—also meets him in the person of Mr. Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street. In any event, the impersonation in *THE NORWOOD BUILDER*



*Jonas Oldacre (Jonathan Adams), a man who could teach *She Who Must Be Obeyed* (that's Ayesha, not Hilda) something about holding a grudge.*



has no place in the original text. But for a passing reference to Oldacre's killer possibly being not McFarlane, but a mysterious tramp, the story has nothing whatsoever to do with Victorian society's wandering unfortunates, and the bones found in the fire behind Oldacre's home are not those of a homeless wayfarer, but a harmless rabbit! (Conan Doyle must have been having an off day in the anatomy department.)

For all its virtues, Granada's *THE NORWOOD BUILDER* is mainly of interest because it introduces, an amazing 10 episodes into the series, Inspector Lestrade. The episode is far from being the London flatfoot's finest hour—for that we must look to the flawlessly-executed adventure of *THE SIX NAPOLEONS*, presented a year later—but it is still a splendid introduction to both the character and Colin Jeavons' definitive interpretation. More than anyone before or since, Jeavons catches not only the essential pomposity of Lestrade, the smugness that Sherlock Holmes (himself not entirely without pride) delights in deflating, but also the fragile, all-too-human ego lurking just beneath the boastful surface. The actor's great achievement lies in his making the man self important without making him unbearably mean-spirited. Lestrade may be small in stature, he may be the first to

gloat when he thinks he's outwitted the world's greatest detective, but he's also the first to congratulate his rival when Holmes literally pulls the policeman's fat—and the mystery's solution—out of the fire. That takes a big man.

Granada has made few missteps in their splendid Sherlock Holmes series, but they have made one that's especially irksome, and that is to have used Lestrade in only six of the 35 episodes thus far produced. There have been occasions when Jeavons has simply been unavailable—the recently completed *THE ELIGIBLE BACHELOR*, in which Lestrade had to be replaced by a fellow officer, is a case in point—but there have also been times when the character has simply been passed over in favor of some lesser light. (Then, too, there is the almost unforgivable instance in which Lestrade's final scene—one of the few scenes in the episode lifted directly from the Canon—was entirely omitted from *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER*. It was filmed, and one can only hope that it will turn up some day, perhaps in a re-edited video release of the program.)

If Granada must retire Lestrade, however temporarily, then they should call in Emrys James as Athelney Jones or Freddie Jones as Inspector Baynes; they are the only actors besides Jeavons to bring the official police force dramati-



*Matthew Solon as John Hector McFarlane*

cally to life. Meanwhile, and until such time as he returns to the fold, let's enjoy Inspector Lestrade in *THE NORWOOD BUILDER* and the five further episodes in which he appears, and applaud Colin Jeavons for his outstanding contribution to the world of Sherlock Holmes.

—Richard Valley

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# the NEWS HOUND

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Your Canine Columnist cuts short a visit to the vet to bring you entertainment news for Spring, Summer, and Beyond.

The film version of Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* from Geffen/Warner Bros. is scheduled to begin production in Paris this July, starring Brad Pitt as Louis and (possibly) Daniel Day-Lewis as Lestat. Neil Jordan, Oscar-nominated for *THE CRYING GAME*, will direct. Also scheduled to start this year is John Carpenter's remake of *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* for Universal. Carpenter has completed the screenplay with writer David Himmelstein and will probably direct. Tom Holland and Wes Craven were previously announced as directors on the long-delayed project.

Tim Burton and Denise DiNovi, the *BATMAN RETURNS* team currently producing the stop-motion *NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS* for Disney, start production this year on a bio-pic of infamous director Edward D. Wood, Jr. Burton will direct the life story of the creator of *GLEN OR GLENDA* and *PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE*; Johnny Depp will likely star. Gowns provided by the Edith Head estate (just kidding).

Due this April are Warner's *THE CRUSH* with fatally attractive Cary Elwes fending off frighteningly fetching 14-year-old Alicia Silverstone; a new production of the Gothic fantasy *THE SECRET GARDEN*, filmed in England by Warners from an adaptation by EDWARD SCISSORHANDS scriptwriter Caroline Thompson; and Stephen King's *THE DARK HALF*, finally being released from limbo by Orion (with *NEEDFUL THINGS* soon to follow from Columbia). . . . Headed for Summer exposure are Sean Connery in *RISING SUN*, Harrison Ford in *THE FUGITIVE*, and large, very expensive lizards in *JURASSIC PARK*.

TV miniseries soon to come include two Stephen King adaptations for ABC: *THE TOMMYKNOCKERS*, directed by Lewis Teague ("IT") and scheduled for imminent airing this Spring, and an eight-hour production of *THE STAND* to be helmed by Mick Garris (*SLEEPWALKERS*) and produced by Laurel Entertainment for the 1993-94 season.

In other small-screen news . . . The Man of Steel lives again in the new ABC series *LOIS AND CLARK: THE NEW*

*ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN* . . . Helen Mirren stars as DCI Jane Tennison in a third *PRIME SUSPECT* drama, which Granada puts into production later this year (a feature film from Universal is also in development) . . . *THE MYSTERY OF MORSE* is an hour-long documentary by Central TV on the making of the (possibly) final *INSPECTOR MORSE* installment. U.S. viewers will probably see it during a tedious PBS pledge drive . . . Canadian suspense-anthology series *THE HIDDEN ROOM* will return after a year-long hiatus, with



**THE SECRET GARDEN**

new episodes on Lifetime Cable starting in June . . . Roger Moore has completed a starring stint in an MCA/ABC pilot entitled *THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T DIE*. He'll also make an appearance in the Robert Evans *SAINT* movie for Paramount . . . Sydney Pollack produces a series of hard-boiled crime stories (*à la* James M. Cain) for Show time pay-cable. Top feature directors will be lined up to helm each half-hour episode . . . *STRANGE PARADISE*, the baffling late-60s occult soap opera (and marginal *DARK SHADOWS* clone) is again available for syndication. Watch for it if you dare . . . Professional tricksters Penn and Teller are developing a pilot for an ABC detective series . . . *TWILIGHT ZONE* fans had better stock up on blank tape: The Sci-Fi Channel has purchased multi-year rights to air the original Serling series on their unfortunately hard-to-find cable service. The House suggests hounding your local pay-TV supplier now.

Pounce into your local video store and get your paws on *DEATH MAGIC*, a lust- and terror-filled title from Domino Theatre Productions. It concerns the reckless resurrection of a homicidal 19th-century military officer by some neophyte necromancers. Also awaiting you on the video rental racks are *CANDYMAN*, *WHISPERS IN THE DARK*, *THE CURSE IV*, and the tele-feature *STEPHEN KING'S "IT."* Newly released is the full-length version of *SALEM'S LOT: THE MINISERIES* in a two-tape set from Warner's for \$29.98. And Paramount is now offering *DEAD AGAIN* and *THE ADDAMS FAMILY* at a reduced \$19.98 list price.

It's official: Warner Home Video has finally released the Hammer horrors *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE* and *TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA* (along with the just-plain-horrible *STARSHIP INVASIONS*) in a special offering of Christopher Lee titles for \$19.98 each. Thank you, Warners! We're still waiting for *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED*, among others . . . Due on video in April are *DR. GIGGLES*, *BASIC INSTINCT: The Director's Cut*, and the bargain-priced (\$19.95) MCA releases *Q: THE WINGED SERPENT*, *CHILD'S PLAY 3*, *BASKET CASE 3*, and *THE PEOPLE UNDER THE STAIRS*.

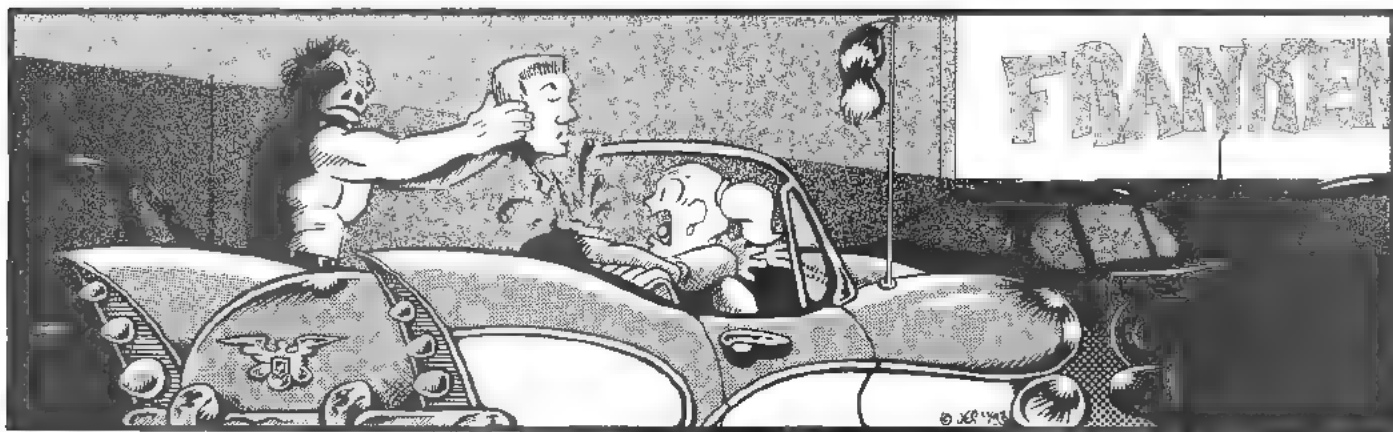
Fellow cinema scribe The Phantom of the Movies dropped into the Hound's den to tell *Scarlet Street* readers about *Videoscope*, the Phantom's fun, fact-filled newsletter for home-video fans and fanatics. "We've all experienced the heart-break of traipsing to our 'nabe' video store with maybe two or three desired titles in mind, only to find that all available copies have already been rented," says the Phantom. "What's left is a wide array of obscure titles. We've designed *Videoscope* to serve as a portable guide to be taken to vidstores for instant consultation." Readers interested in a year's subscription to the bimonthly *Videoscope* can send a check or money order for \$14.97 (\$19.97 Canadian, \$29.97 foreign) to PhanMedia, P. O. Box 31, Keyport, NJ 07735-0031. If the Phantom's newsletter is anything like *The Phantom's Ultimate Video Guide*, it'll be a scream.

In closing, The Hound pays tribute to the late Dana Andrews, Denholm Elliott, Anthony Perkins, and Robert Shayne: they will be missed, but their work will continue to entertain us all.



**The News  
Hound**

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## Shock Drive-In Presents THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE by John Brunas

**D**r. Erik Lorimer (Bruce Bennett) is summoned to the office of his colleague and old friend, Dr. Wayne McGregor (Doug Kennedy), to confer on a puzzling case. McGregor has accidentally discovered that his attractive nurse, Jane Marvin (Beverly Garland), has subconsciously assumed a new identity as the result of a shock of terrifying magnitude. The doctor is understandably hesitant about revealing what he has learned to Jane, fearful that this newly-acquired knowledge about her past will initiate a complete withdrawal from reality. He implores his friend to listen to Jane's testimony under hypnosis and form his own opinion.

Placed in a trance, the young woman reveals that her real name is Joyce Hatton Webster. She takes the doctors back to the moment her nightmare began, just a few hours after her wedding to former serviceman Paul Webster (Richard Crane) . . .

As the newlyweds sit together in a cozy train compartment, Joyce cannot help but marvel over her husband's remarkable recovery from a near fatal airplane crash that left him horribly mangled. He is on the verge of disclosing to Joyce the heretofore secret nature of

his miraculous medical treatment when he receives a distressing wire. Badly shaken, Webster leaves his wife's side and rushes to a telephone booth during a brief mail stop. Joyce becomes hysterical

when the train pulls away and leaves Paul behind.

Despite an intensive search, Joyce can find no trace of her husband. Finally, the desperate woman traces Paul's fraternity pin to his alma mater in Louisiana, establishing his former residence at the Cypresses, a stately old plantation in the heart of the bayou country. With renewed hope, Joyce makes the journey to Bayou Landing. At the almost-deserted train depot, she meets Mannon (Lon Chaney, Jr.), an ill-mannered resident of the Cypresses who sports a formidable hook in place of a missing hand. The brute reluctantly agrees to give Joyce a ride to the plantation.

Joyce's tempered expectations are immediately dashed by the hostile reception she receives from Mrs. Livinia Hawthorne (Frieda Inescort), the present owner of the Cypresses. The disgruntled woman insists that she's never heard the name Paul Webster before and accuses Joyce of plotting a malicious deception. Realizing that she will not be able to



*Richard Crane suffers the heartbreak of psoriasis in 1959's THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE. Contrary to rumor, the film's original title was not I MARRIED A HANDBAG.*



get a train out of the district until early the next morning, Mrs. Hawthorne extends to Joyce a less-than-enthusiastic invitation to spend the night, on the condition that she remain in her room at all times. Joyce's intuition tells her that the old woman knows more than she is willing to admit.

Late that evening, the distressed Mrs. Hawthorne calls on Dr. Mark Sinclair (George Macready), an old friend whose clinic is located nearby. Sinclair is a brilliant scientist who has devoted his life to healing tragically mutilated men and women. His private hospital houses a handful of patients, all of whom have undergone an astonishing new treatment. Mrs. Hawthorne warns Sinclair of Joyce's suspicions. In the course of their conversation, one of Sinclair's patients goes berserk and the doctor sedates the agitated man with a prolonged infrared-ray treatment.

Early the next morning, Joyce is introduced to Dr. Sinclair. His evasive nature removes from Joyce's mind any doubt that Paul is indeed on the premises. In an emotional confrontation, Mrs. Hawthorne reveals that Paul is present and that she is his mother.

Sinclair and Mrs. Hawthorne decide that the time has come for Joyce to be told the full story behind Paul's tragedy. Inviting the young woman to his laboratory, the scientist relates how he first discovered the fantastic healing powers of the hormone hydrocortisone, found in living alligators. It is this reptilian glandular secretion that enables the species to grow new appendages after the parts have been lost or mangled in battle. Believing that the isolated protein chemical might have the same healing effect in human beings, Dr. Sinclair injected the pituitary extraction into the veins of a handful of volunteer patients who had suffered hideous mutilations as the result of various accidents.

The initial results were nothing short of astounding—damaged limbs and scarred flesh took on new form, leaving behind no trace of disfigurement. Then, suddenly, Sinclair's patients suffered a frightening setback. Ghastly counter-evolutionary changes in their metabolisms began to take place, rendering each victim a human/reptile hybrid. Sequestering his patients in his bayou clinic, the sorrowful doctor worked feverishly to reverse the damage caused by the injection. After extensive experimentation on swamp alligators, Sinclair concluded that concentrated exposure to X-rays strengthened by gamma radiation from the Cobalt 60 bomb might prove to be effective in reversing the effects of the injections. However, he needed many more months of testing before human application could even be considered.

Distressed over the great anguish he has inadvertently caused Joyce, Webster demands that Sinclair conduct the radioactive treatment on him the next night, regardless of the risk. Joyce tries to talk her husband out of his decision, maintaining that her love for him has not changed on account of his altered state. But his mind is made up.

Joyce and Mrs. Hawthorne accompany Paul to the laboratory. Standing outside the glass-walled isolation chamber, the two women watch in great anticipation as Dr. Sinclair straps Webster onto the steel slab positioned under the massive X-ray generator. The doctor has determined that exposure to the gamma rays must not under any circumstances exceed 30 seconds, or the results might be disastrous. After a final word of heartfelt apology, Dr. Sinclair beams the X-ray gun on Paul, engulfing him in an eerie radioactive glow.

Meanwhile, the perennially intoxicated Mannon, loaded gun in hand, searches the hospital for the "two-legged 'gator." Breaking into the laboratory, he pushes Sinclair and the two women aside and maliciously readjusts the valves controlling the gamma shower, creating a series of minor explosions inside the chamber. Sinclair and Mrs. Hawthorne



**ABOVE AND BELOW:** Putting Jane Marvin (Beverly Garland) under hypnosis, nosy doctors McGregor and Lorimer (Doug Kennedy and Bruce Bennett) discover that, in her previous identity as Joyce Hatton Webster, the poor woman was wife to a reptile (Richard Crane). She probably smoked, too.

are knocked unconscious during the mêlée, but Joyce follows the crazed handyman into the flaming room.

The raging brute points his gun at Paul's inert form, but freezes in terror before he can fire off a shot. "You ain't him!" Mannon exclaims. "You can't be him!" What Dr. Sinclair hoped would reverse the effects of the glandular injection actually consummated its damage: Prolonged exposure to the intense radiation has transformed Paul Webster into an alligator in human form! Mannon attempts to slash the 'gator man with his hook, but penetrates the X-ray generator instead, sending thousands of megavolts surging through his body.

Joyce pursues the bellowing mutation into the marshes while Dr. Sinclair frantically attempts to control the holocaust. Seconds later, the entire building is destroyed in a powerful explosion, killing both the doctor and Mrs. Hawthorne. Overcome with horror, Joyce watches as Paul is attacked by a surfacing alligator, which he savagely overcomes. He stumbles exhaustedly through the ooze and becomes trapped in quicksand. Joyce sobs hysterically as her monstrously deformed husband disappears beneath the surface of the marshes





Her story told, Joyce Webster slowly comes out of the hypnotic trance, becoming Jane Marvin once again. While she regains her composure, McGregor and Lorimer retreat into the former's study to debate whether or not the nurse should be told the facts behind her real identity. They finally decide that it would serve no purpose to shatter the young woman's new found happiness and peace of mind. The strange case of Joyce Hutton Webster is closed.



By the time Roy Del Ruth's modest science-fiction/horror thriller **THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE**, was booked into theatrical circulation during the summer of 1959, the fantasy genre had already been well-saturated with a sizeable number of Saturday matinee monsteramas featuring a variety of radioactive, gargantuan, or teenaged terrors, and interplanetary invasions of dime-store proportions. Out of this sea of juvenilia emerged a number of intelligent, reasonably well-crafted works that have endured to this day in the hearts of fans. While they were hardly on a par with the handful of true classics of the period,

films such as **CURSE OF THE FACELESS MAN** (1956), **NOT OF THIS EARTH** (1957), **THE MONSTER THAT CHALLENGED THE WORLD** (1957), and **THE VAMPIRE** (1957) are nevertheless deserving of respect, if only for the civilized manner in which they were conceived and executed. Though flawed in many areas, these works were immeasurable improvements over the puerile efforts of such "schlocksters" as Herman Cohen, Jerry Warren, and Bert Gordon.

Despite some reservations, **THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE** deserves to be added to this roster of estimable pictures. For the most part, it is a sober, bleakly atmospheric film, benefitting from sincere performances, flavorsome direction, and careful plotting. Scenarist Orville H. Hampton (who had previously written the 1955 crime meller, **NEW ORLEANS UNCENSORED**, and made additional contributions to the fantasy genre with 1959's **THE ATOMIC SUBMARINE** and 1962's **JACK THE GIANT KILLER**), contrived a new slant to the timeworn man-into-monster school of horror, gearing his admittedly far-fetched melodrama toward a mature audience by concentrating on the human tragedy beneath the surface chills. In some respects, **THE ALLIGA-**

*On a scale of one to ten, Paul Webster ranks high — on scales. Richard Crane (television's ROCKY JONES, SPACE RANGER in the 50s) played the man with a worse hide than Hyde! Frieda Inescort, George Macready, and Beverly Garland were Paul's mother, physician, and wife, respectively.*

TOR PEOPLE is reminiscent of Kurt Neumann's 1958 sci-fi classic THE FLY, most notably in the story's focus on the victim's wife and her unswerving dedication to delivering her husband from his ghastly fate.

Made on a typically modest budget by independent filmmaker Robert Lippert's Associated Producers, THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE commenced production on Wednesday, April 15, 1959, and was in the can before the end of the month. Actor George Macready was added to the cast about midway into production. On May 20th, composer Irving Gertz conducted and recorded his own score while the remaining post production tasks neared completion. Twentieth Century Fox, the picture's distributor, held a studio preview on Wednesday, July 8th, and wrapped up plans for general release.

Armed with such sensational tag lines as "horror to make your skin crawl," THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE opened in 1,600 theatres across the country on Monday, July 13th, sharing an all-horror double bill with Edward L. Berns' palad RETURN OF THE FLY. The studio's publicity department conceived a number of outlandish stunts that they hoped imaginative theatre owners would use to promote the film. One suggestion was to rent a giant alligator-head mask from a local costume shop, dress up a theatre employee, and send him around town to scare up patrons; another was to give away live baby alligators to the first dozen or so patrons as door prizes (Calling the ASPCA!) The most outrageous suggestion of all, however, was for theatres to obtain the services of an alligator-wrestling act for a lobby performance on opening night, offering a month's free admission to any patron willing to step into the pit with the giant lizard for three minutes!

Predictably, the press was less than enthusiastic about THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE. Maxine Dowling, staff critic for the New York News, concluded that the film

just misses being a farce, in spite of some talented people. The cast works against insurmountable odds in the waste of celluloid. For this picture has as asinine a plot as you will see in a long time of movie going . . . you will have to see it to believe it, and then you won't.

Industry appraisals of the picture were decidedly more charitable. In its July 15th edition, *Motion Picture Exhibitor* states that the film is "aided by good performances," adding, "while there is nothing very different to put this horror entry above other similar films, it should satisfy fans of the chills and make up satisfactorily as part of the horror bill. There are also plenty of alligators around for added menace."

Jack Moffitt of the *Hollywood Reporter* summed up the movie as "a better than average horror film based on a remote but accurate scientific gimmick. Hampton's screenplay and Roy Del Ruth's direction keep the yarn from being as hokey as it sounds."

*Variety's* staff reviewer "Glen" was surprisingly positive (and a mite too enthusiastic), describing the picture as "a good program horror film." Comparing it to its co-feature, Glen voted THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE

dramatically the stronger of the two. Hampton's screenplay is logically developed and provides good characterizations [for] actress Beverly Garland and actors Richard Crane and Lon Chaney . . . Hampton's script provides



plausible explanations for the implausible and injects warmth and humor at points making the horror more horrible. Equipped with well-motivated lines, Garland turns in a fine performance. While Frieda Inescort overacts her well-written mother role, the rest of the principal supporting cast does well. The picture lags in the middle stretch—after the girl arrives at the mansion but before she discovers her husband—which prevents the film from being exceptional, but it's more than good enough for the market at which it's aimed. Karl Struss' photography, Arthur Cornell's sound effects, and Harry Gerstad's editing are decided plusses and Lyle R. Wheeler and John Mansbridge's art direction is masterful, particularly when the budget is taken into consideration.

Remembered chiefly as a contract director for Warner Brothers, turning out a score of assembly-line comedies and melodramas, Roy Del Ruth revealed a particular feel for the horror genre by effectively sustaining an aura of pervading gloom and futility throughout. (His only other chiller experience was the feeble 1954 Edgar Allan Poe adaptation PHANTOM OF THE RUE MORGUE.) From the film's outset, screenwriter Hampton contrived to kindle viewer curiosity in the story by unveiling the facts behind Nurse Marvin's past life in a slow, deliberate fashion. Although the narrative occasionally fails to maintain proper pacing (particularly during Joyce Webster's investigation at the plantation), the thickening plot still compels attention.

The creative efforts of Hampton and Del Ruth are complemented by those of Irving Gertz, who contributed a moody, 40s-style score which added considerably to the somber atmosphere. Veteran cinematographer Karl Struss, who had enjoyed a distinguished career in both Germany and Hollywood during the "golden years," succeeded in capturing on film the melancholic miasma of the Hawthorne estate and Dr. Sinclair's bayou clinic, as well as the raw beauty of the savage marshes. Struss's earlier contributions to the genre included DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE (1931), ISLAND OF LOST SOULS (1933), KRONOS (1957), SHE DEVIL (1957), and, most significantly, THE FLY.

One of the most important factors in determining the success of a motion picture of such implausible dimensions as THE AL-

*John Brunas, co-author of Universal Horrors (McFarland, 1990), is a long-time contributor to horror magazines. This article originally appeared in The Beverly Garland Club Journal.*





Horror veteran Lon Chaney, Jr. contributed one of his better drunken brute-man portrayals to *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE* (1959). Here, he proves to Beverly Garland that there's more than one way to get crocked.

#### THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE

##### Credits

An Associated Producers Production. Filmed in CinemaScope. Director: Roy Del Ruth. Producer: Jack Leewood. Screenplay: Orville H. Hampton. Director of Photography: Karl Struss. Music: Irving Gertz. Assistant Director: Ed Haldeman. Art Director: John Mansbridge, Lyle R. Wheeler. Film Editor: Harry Gerstad. Sound: W. Donald Flick. Sound Effects: Arthur J. Cornell. Production Manager: Herb Mendelson. Set Decoration: Walter M. Scott, Joseph Kish. Makeup: Ben Nye, Dick Smith. Costume Supervision: William McCrary, Ollie Hughes. Based on a story by Orville H. Hampton and Charles O'Neal. Running time: 74 minutes.

##### Cast

Beverly Garland (Joyce Webster, alias Jane Marvin), Richard Crane (Paul Webster), Lon Chaney, Jr. (Mannon), George Macready (Dr. Mark Sinclair), Frieda Inescort (Mrs. Henry Hawthorne), Bruce Bennett (Dr. Erik Lorimer), Douglas Kennedy (Dr. Wayne McGregor), Vince Townsend, Jr. (Toby), Ruby Goodwin (Lou Ann), John Merrick (Nurse No. 1), Lee Warren (Nurse No. 2), Bill Bradley (Patient No. 6), Dudley Dickerson (Porter), Hal K. Dawson (Train Conductor), Boyd Stockman (Paul's Double).

*LIGATOR PEOPLE* is the sincerity of the performances. Happily, the cast adopted a serious, no-nonsense attitude toward the material, which shows on screen. Beverly Garland, who played the grimly determined Joyce Webster, explained in an interview that it was Del Ruth who kept the film from falling into a "B" movie bog. "The attitude of the cast and crew," said Garland, "was tongue-in-cheek. But Del Ruth did not treat it as a 'quickie' movie. He worked very hard with all of us to make the film as realistic as possible. This wasn't an exploitation film, as so many movies are today. Although it was a 'B' movie, the attitude was not to 'make it quick and get out.' We tried to do a good job, and I remember that De. Ruth worked very diligently to make it honest. Roy didn't laugh much during filming; he didn't think it was very funny. He took it very seriously. Thank God, because he's really the one that kept our sanity. There were a couple of times that I just fell apart laughing. If it weren't for Roy, who looked at me as if to say, 'After all, we aren't doing *GONE WITH THE WIND*,' I think I never would have made it."

Some critics feel that Garland's performance in *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE* is one of her best, equalling even her fine work in such Roger Corman perennials as *IT CONQUERED THE WORLD* (1956) and *NOT OF THIS EARTH*. Garland does admit, however, that the productions of Del Ruth and Corman had decidedly different atmospheres on the set. "Working conditions on *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE* were very good," emphasized Garland, "but when you work with Corman, you can work with anyone! Working conditions with Roger were absolutely God-awful. You took what you got and good luck. Filming *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE* was like working on a 'double-A movie' compared to working for Roger Corman."

Although Garland said it was difficult to maintain her composure in several scenes calling for complete earnestness (e.g., assuring husband Richard Crane that his hideous transformation will not affect their future happiness together), she displayed none of her incredulity to the audience. In her two scenes as Nurse Marvin, she radiates a warmth and kindness that immediately places the viewer on her side throughout the ordeal. By the time the young woman's story is fully related, one is so impressed by Joyce's strength of character and dedication that a sense of relief is felt after the conferring psychologists agree not to disturb the state of peaceful tranquility her alter ego has achieved.

"I just played her," Garland said laughing, "the way you would if you were married to an alligator! The reason I won the sympathy of the audience is that I'm a hell of a good actress! Seriously, you have to play these kinds of pictures for real; play them straight. If you don't, people will not believe you. And *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE* was probably the hardest picture to play straight that I have ever appeared in.

"The hardest thing in this movie was simply to keep a straight face! I was all right from the beginning of the film up until I found my husband in that wonderful sanatorium, and then I just fell apart. That was the end of me! The most difficult scene for me was the one where I had to be a bit romantic and console my poor husband. This was when he was pretty much an alligator. I had to say, 'I'll love you no matter what,' which I think took me a good half day to say. They almost had to film that on the back of my head. But I managed to get through it, although it was very hard. Laugh? I thought I'd die! I'm sure Richard Crane was smirking, but you couldn't tell because he had his alligator makeup on. He lucked out. He could snort and giggle and nobody would know it."

Supporting Garland (particularly when she is reduced to tears of laughter) was a well-rounded cast of seasoned professionals. Richard Crane, a nominal leading man of decidedly limited acting skill, is surprisingly effective as the doomed Paul Webster, espe-

cially in his emotion-fraught moments with Beverly, Frieda Inescort, and George Macready. The late actor became a familiar face when he starred on television in the early 50s as ROCKY JONES, SPACE RANGER. Six years before *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE*, Crane shared the screen with Garland in E. A. Dupont's *THE NEANDERTHAL MAN* (1953).

Eschewing most of his hamstrung mannerisms, George Macready makes a favorable impression as the refreshingly sane Mark Sinclair. Usually cast as the sly villain in such films as Columbia's *GILDA* (1946), the flamboyant actor is probably best remembered for his role as the exquisitely malicious Martin Peyton on the popular TV soap *PEYTON PLACE*.

British actress Frieda Inescort adopted a mild regional dialect for her role as Livinia Hawthorne, the forlorn mother of the alligator man. Unfortunately, the stern, unyielding demeanor she casts in her initial scenes with Garland doesn't sufficiently mellow in the film's later chapters. Ardent horror fans fondly recall Inescort as the valiant vampire fighter in Columbia's *RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE* (1944) with Bela Lugosi.

In minor roles, former Olympic-champ-turned-actor Bruce Bennett (who, as Herman Brix, was the Lord of the Jungle in 1935's *THE NEW ADVENTURES OF TARZAN*) and familiar B-picture actor Douglas Kennedy perform adequately enough.

*THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE* also boasts one of the horror screen's most-renowned bogeymen, Lon Chaney, Jr., in an important role. His slimy, bull-headed Mannon is typical of the kind of part to which the sadly-misused actor became accustomed in the 50s (in films such as 1952's *BLACK CASTLE*, 1956's *INDESTRUCTIBLE MAN* and *THE BLACK SLEEP*, and 1957's *THE CYCLOPS*). These unappetizing brute-man roles were a far cry from the comparatively urbane characterizations that Chaney assayed in such Universal favorites as *THE WOLF MAN* (1941), *SON OF DRACULA* (1943), and *CALLING DR. DEATH* (1943). To his credit, the actor imbues Mannon with the proper amount of menace and lechery, though he often crosses the line between horror and hilarity in his wild ravings against his much-hated 'gators.

Considering *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE*'s assets, it is indeed unfortunate that Hampton and Del Ruth literally sabotage their film's integrity by saddling it with a ridiculous (and consequently hilarious) climax. Not only is the ill-conceived finale inconsistent with the mature texture and tone of the picture, but it makes no sense whatsoever. Granted, the supposition that an enormous dosage of radiation may reverse the effects of a glandular injection is unlikely enough, but the suggestion that this application should trigger a full transformation is just too ludicrous to be taken seriously, even within the context of the impossible. Another inconceivable aspect of the climax is that Paul Webster's human reasoning powers remain reasonably intact despite the fact that his brain has become totally reptilian. (*THE FLY* also carried this misconception—victim David Hedison was able to think and function as a human being even though this head was that of an insect.) Although makeup ace Ben Nye and Dick Smith designed a formidable-looking alligator headpiece, and its initial image, amid the swirling mists of the flame-engulfed isolation chamber, is effectively



No 'gator aid, Mannon (Lon Chaney, Jr.) meets a gruesome end at the claws of Paul Webster (Richard Crane) in 1959's *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE*.

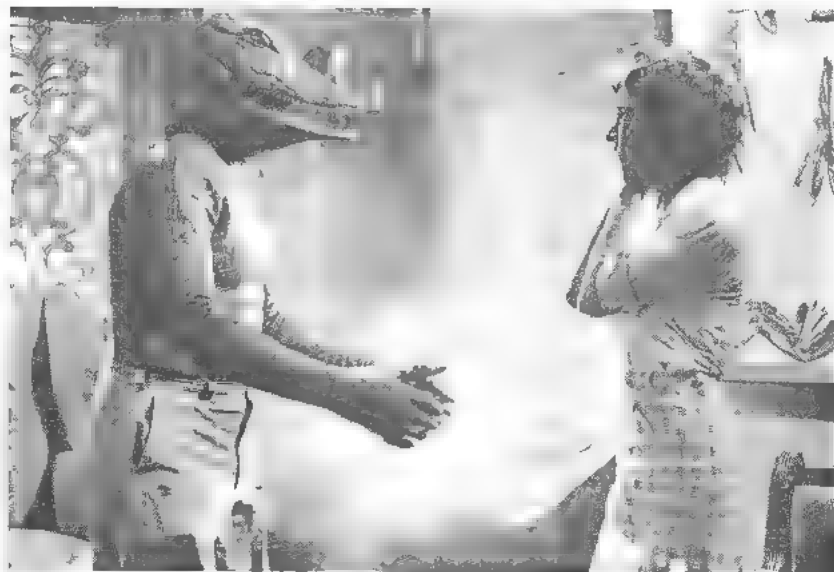
realized, the frenzied action of the finale is enough to evoke derisive laughter, even in the film's most ardent admirers. By following the set pattern established by the juvenile monster exercises of the period, the creators of *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE* did irreparable harm to their picture.

Though not without some obvious flaws, *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE* still holds up as an enjoyable example of the "science gone wild" films of the 50s, those films recently spoofed in Universal's *MATINEE* (1993). Garland, however, feels that there may be a generation gap. "I think the finished product is excellent," she concluded, "and I really did like it. I don't know how well the film would go over today, though. I'm not so sure anybody would buy the idea. But I loved making it. After all, I've worked with so many [real] alligators and snakes that they just don't bother me."

Unless, of course, she finds herself married to one, down in the Louisiana swamps.



*"But, darling," begs the love-sick Paul, "if only you suffered from the same condition, why, we'd make such a happy alligator pair!"*



# Revelry with Beverly Beverly Garland

Interviewed by Kevin G. Shinnick

On the 50s crime show *DECOY*, Beverly Garland was a police woman long before Angie Dickinson peppered our television screens with distaff games of cops and robbers. On matinee movie screens during the same decade, Garland met strange men who were NOT OF THIS EARTH and encountered an outlandish Venusian as *IT CONQUERED THE WORLD*. She crossed paths with *THE NEANDERTHAL MAN*; married one of *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE*. Later, in the 60s, 70s, and 80s, she was hot-to-trot mama to murderous cheerleader Tuesday Weld (in *PRETTY POISON*), bubbly sitcom wife to conservative hubbies Bing Crosby and Fred MacMurray (on *THE BING CROSBY SHOW* and *MY THREE SONS*, respectively), and solid, stay-at-home support for the peripatetic *SCARECROW AND MRS. KING*. The roles Beverly Garland has enjoyed most, though, are the ones that have allowed the feisty actress to let her hair down and play rough—as one of the tough-as-nails *SWAMP WOMEN*; as a doctor fleeing a burning village in *CURUCU, BEAST OF THE AMAZON*; as a suicidal resident of *THE MAD ROOM*. Here's ever-beautiful fan favorite Beverly Garland, paying a welcome visit to *Scarlet Street* . . .



All photos courtesy of Car. A. De Vecchio





**LEFT:** Beverly Garland was one of television's first woman cops on the syndicated show *DECOY*. **RIGHT:** In the 1957 bio-pic *THE JOKER IS WILD*, Beverly Garland played opposite Frank Sinatra (as nightclub comic Joe E. Lewis) and Eddie Albert (as Sinatra's accompanist and Garland's husband). **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Garland and costar John Bromfield face the horrors of *CURUCU, BEAST OF THE AMAZON* (1956), directed by Curt Siodmak.

**Beverly Garland:** Well, now, what can I talk to you about?

**Scarlet Street:** You can tell us how you got started as an actress . . .

**BG:** Well, I started when I was in grammar school. Then I went to the Glendale little theatre and got my first part; I was a maid, or I came in and asked somebody if they wanted coffee or something. I got the bug and did some plays at the little theatre. Finally my mother said, "Well, why don't you take acting lessons?" There was a woman by the name of Anita Arliss. I don't know if you remember the actor George Arliss?

**SS:** George Arliss, yes.

**BG:** Well, his sister, in those days, taught voice. It had nothing to do with how to act, but she really liked me. She was very close to the studios and all the people who ran the studios—Louis B. Mayer and Warner and those people—and she would recommend certain of her students who she thought were good. They would be able to have an interview with the heads of the studios.

**SS:** Starting at the top . . .

**BG:** But then my father was transferred to Arizona, so I left and went to Phoenix and back into little theatre. And that's where I met Steve Allen. He was working at the little theatre, too.

**SS:** Really?

**BG:** And he became a tremendous comedian and I became an actress. Then my father said, "Well, now, what are you going to be when you grow up?" I mean, there was no question that I was going to have to work. And I said, "Well, I think that I will be a nurse." He said, "A nurse?

You don't wanna be a nurse! You wanna be a doctor!" And I thought, "Oh, my God! A doctor? Gee, I don't think I can be a brain surgeon. I can try, but I don't think I'm that motivated. Or that bright!" So I said to my mother, "What am I gonna do? I don't want to disappoint my dad!" And she said, "Why don't you call Anita Arliss and see if she'd be interested in taking you on again." So I called, and she said, "Oh, Beverly! I would love to have you come back and work with me." So I went back to Glendale, which my father had been transferred back to, and I was ready to work with Anita and she died!

**SS:** Bad timing!

**BG:** So that was the end of my wonderful career, and I hadn't even started anything! Finally, I got my Equity card and started doing summer stock. I got into a play and an agent saw me and asked if he could sign me, and he did. I did a movie called D.O.A.—dead on arrival—with Edmund O'Brien.

**SS:** That was your first film?

**BG:** That was my first film. They were very excited about the movie. It was up for an Academy Award, I don't know whether people remember that or not, but it was. One of the public relations people took me out for dinner and asked me if I thought that D.O.A. would win the award, and I, being in my young 20s and honest, said, "I don't think so."

**SS:** Then what happened?

**BG:** Well, he went back to the producers and said, "You know, you've given this girl a magnificent break, and she doesn't care. She's not appreciative, and

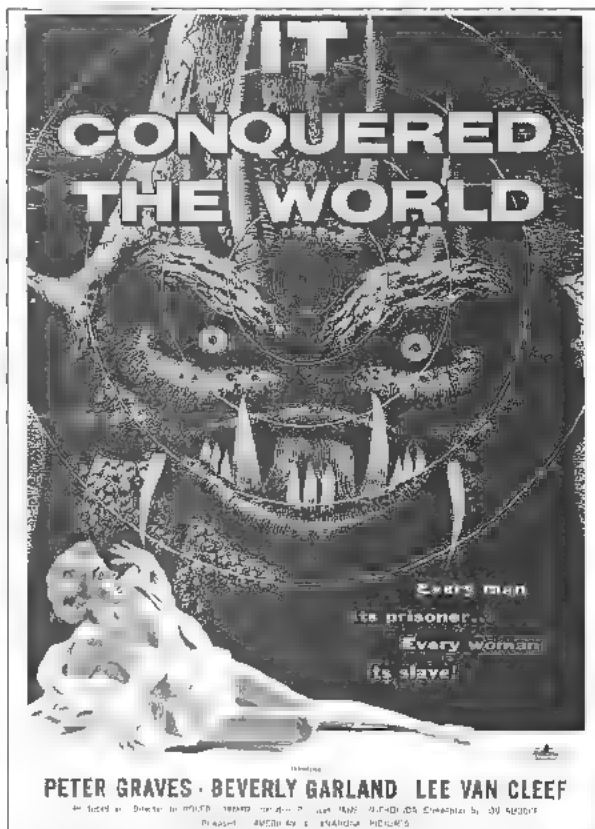
I thought you should know." So when people asked, "Would you recommend Beverly for this part," they'd say, "No, I don't think so." Finally, my agent saw them and they related the story. So I went to the office and said, "I'm really sorry. It wasn't meant to hurt anyone. I shouldn't have said it. I feel very bad." And they just looked me straight in the eye and said, "We don't know what you're talking about, Bev." Well, I knew then that they were gonna keep blackballing me. And they did. I didn't work for three years in this town. That was the beginning of my career!

**SS:** Yes, but, finally . . .

**BG:** Finally I got back into the business again, and started doing movies. I ended up doing a movie called *THE JOKER'S WILD* with Frank Sinatra. Then I was asked to come to New York and have a meeting with Olympic Films. They were going to do a television series about a police woman, and they asked me if I would play the lead.

**SS:** That was *DECOY*.

**BG:** Yeah, *DECOY*. And so I plunged into television—which was the biggest mistake of my life! The series only lasted a year, but it played seven years in syndication, and when I came home I had a red dot on my forehead. It said, "This girl does television! We don't hire people who do television!" I had to start all over again. And so I became a TV child, you know? I did television; it was the only place I could work. Then, of course, I was nominated for an Emmy, and through that I met Roger Corman, who was directing "B" movies. I did



An otherworldly invader resembling a horny cucumber menaces Terra's own Beverly Garland in 1956's *IT CONQUERED THE WORLD*, directed by the legendary Roger Corman.

SWAMP WOMEN with Roger, and *IT CONQUERED THE WORLD*, and *NOT OF THIS EARTH*, and *GUNSLINGER* and *THUNDER OVER HAWAII*—I became a regular in his stable, and never dreamed that anyone would see those movies and that would be the end. Of course, they've become a whole cult! But I never knew that. I never paid any attention. I just got out there, did my job, and that was it. Good bye, and where's the next job coming from? It amazes me that people say, "Tell me about *IT CONQUERED THE WORLD*." And I say, "What? I mean, who cares?" (Laughs)

SS: *We do!*

BG: Still, that was my attitude at the time. I mean, I didn't have any idea that anybody would ever see them, or care about them, and of course they've become classics today. So that's how I started.

SS: *Well, timing is everything.*

BG: I think that's very true. I mean, you look back at your life and think, "Well, if I could've I would've . . . whatever." You do what you have to do in your life, and that's what I've done, you know? I got married 32 years ago to a man who, when I was supposed to do *THE MIRACLE WORKER* on Broadway, told me that if I went to Broadway he might not be there when I got back. And I believed it.

SS: *Ah, no.*

BG: That was kind of a milestone in my acting career; I decided that the most important thing in my life was going to be my marriage and my children and that's what I did. Where the acting took me it took me, but the children and the marriage and the scrubbing and the cooking became the primary importance in my life. So, you know, maybe my career would have been different if I hadn't done that, but I did do it, and I've been blessed; I've got great kids and a husband. That's how it all evolved.

SS: *Well, you have a good attitude about it, then.*

BG: Absolutely!

SS: *Can we backtrack a bit?*

BG: Sure!

SS: *We want to ask you about all those "who cares?" movies. One of your horror films was NEANDERTHAL MAN . . .*

BG: Yes.

SS: *Do you recall anything about it?*

BG: My God! You know, I don't even remember what the hell that picture was about!

SS: *It was sort of a variation on Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Robert Shayne reverted to this caveman type of thing and ran around a lot. No bells, huh?*

BG: (Laughs) Well, I remember it a little. I guess I'm gonna have to look at that movie again.

SS: *How about ROCKET MAN? Lenny Bruce wrote that one . . .*

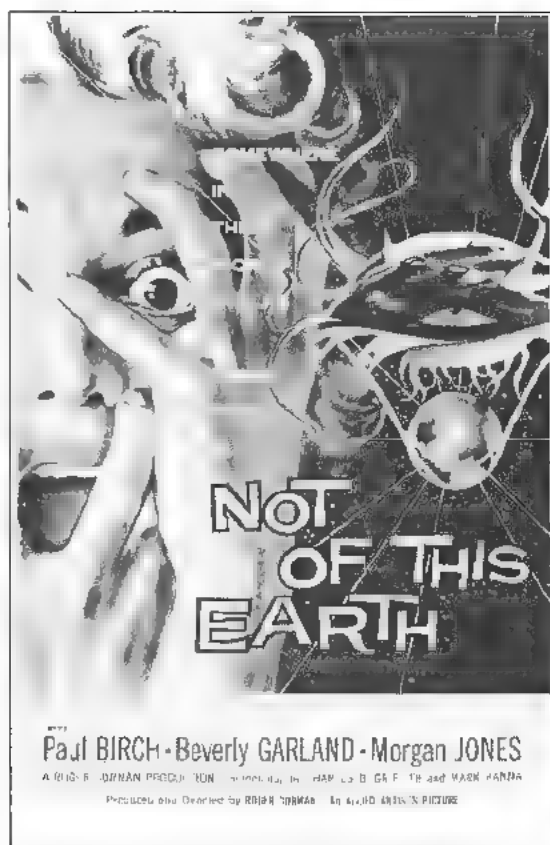
BG: Yes! And I don't remember a hell of a lot about that one, either! I mean, you don't really go back and look at it. You probably should! All of a sudden you have an interview with somebody and they say, "Tell me about *ROCKET MAN* and *NEANDERTHAL MAN*," and you think, "My God! I got that script 45 years ago! How the hell do I know?"

SS: (Laughs) *Let's try another one. How about THE GLASS WEB? That starred Edward G. Robinson.*

BG: Oh, my God, yes! That was wonderful. I'm a very serious actress when I work; I kind of keep to myself, and he was very good and kind of kept to himself, too. I was always awed by him.

SS: *Let's talk about Roger Corman. You dated him at one time, didn't you?*

BG: Well, I don't think you could call it dating. I went out with Roger a couple of times. We were such very good friends and we were both very hyper people, both of us. And we really enjoyed each other, because we loved to talk. He talks a mile a minute, and I talk a mile a minute, and I think Roger felt that I wasn't a dumb blonde. I think he felt that I was someone he could talk to, that he could bring his ideas to, and that I was a bright lady. I think that's where our friendship really flowered, because I wasn't just a typical actress. And I think Roger appreciated that.



**Otherworldly invader Paul Birch menaces Terra's own Beverly Garland in 1957's *NOT OF THIS EARTH*, directed by the legendary Roger Corman. Anyone sense a pattern here?**

**SS:** *It was a good relationship . . .*

**BG:** After I did *THUNDER OVER HAWAII*, which was probably our last movie together, I kind of went my way and he kind of went his. We've always been friends. We're still friends; I still have lunch with him and we still talk—but, it was never in the cards except to be just really good friends.

**SS:** *You don't have any regrets.*

**BG:** He's always fascinated me. I loved being around him because I loved his mind. He's just so full of energy and an "It can be done!" kind of attitude. It's exciting to be around someone like that. Always got a deal going, always something happening. I like that. I like that in a man and he fascinates me.

**SS:** *There's no resentment on your part that Corman never cast you in his later Edgar Allan Poe films?*

**BG:** Well, I do resent that Roger never asked me to participate again; I have always resented that. I think he probably knows that "way back in the recesses of his head somewhere, but that's the way it was. That's what happened and there's nothing I can do about it.

**SS:** *But it didn't interfere all that much with the friendship?*

**BG:** No!

**SS:** *Good.*

**BG:** No. I mean, I didn't talk to him for about 20 years . . .

**SS:** *Oh!*

**BG:** But that had nothing to do with it! (Laughs)

**SS:** *What can you tell us about shooting a Roger Corman film?*

**BG:** Well, when any of us made a Corman film we understood the film; we understood Roger; we understood that it was gonna be done in five days, or 15, or whatever it was. We were all just gung ho actresses and actors, and we wanted to do our very best. There were no frills on Roger's pictures; you put up with a lot, but you were young and you laughed and you certainly weren't anywhere close to being a star. You just believed that that's how people worked. I mean, you never knew that Bogart or Bacall didn't work the way you were working. You were out there moving furniture with the grips and everybody else. It was just kind of a way of life for all of us; it was like being in the club, you know? Like doing summer stock. There were no stars, there were no egos; we all did our thing and worked hard at it, and we all loved it and that's what made these pictures work!

**SS:** *It had sort of a family atmosphere.*

**BG:** Yeah. Roger was such a positive, gung ho kind of guy, that you just felt you couldn't drag your feet. You just got in there and did it, like he did it!

**SS:** *You've always been a very strong personality on film. You weren't the victim all the time.*

**BG:** Well, I think I come over as a very strong person, I really do.

**SS:** *Take, for example, your first Corman film, *SWAMP WOMEN*, in which you played a very strong character. That must have been a difficult shoot.*

**BG:** Well, it was, because it was hot. We stayed in an old, old hotel that had been abandoned, and it just was not comfortable. And everybody had to share a bath, oh God! And the food was not great, and there were a lot of bugs! And, you know, Roger always had poor-boy sandwiches, which were just abominable, at lunch. And then there were the alligators, and the swamp we had to walk through. So it was not an easy shoot—but, you know, it was okay. You know? We did it.

**SS:** *It sounds like the old joke: "What!? And give up show biz?"*

**BG:** (Laughs) That's right!

**SS:** *What did you think of the final cut?*

**BG:** Oh, I loved it. I thought Roger always cut well; I thought his angles were good, and it was always action-packed. Those films were always fast-paced; we were not sitting there doing psychological dramas, you know?

**SS:** *Was it difficult to get into the mood of some of these characters?*

**BG:** No, I don't think so. We pretty well knew what we were doing, and I think we were all good. There were very fine people working for Roger; I think that's



***“All of a sudden you have an interview with somebody and they say, ‘Tell me about NEANDERTHAL MAN,’ and you think, ‘My God! I got that script 45 years ago! How the hell do I know?’”***

proven. We found our characters fast and we did them.

**SS:** Great. How about *IT CONQUERED THE WORLD*?

**BG:** Well, everybody remembers that one. That was the monster one.

**SS:** The killer cucumber. You weren't impressed with that monster, were you?

**BG:** No. Roger was so thrilled about this monster, and I was so excited about seeing it. I'd been talking about the monster forever on that machine in the film, then to see this thing! I said, "Roger, my God! I could sit on this monster! He's so tiny! What are you gonna do with him?" I mean, I thought he was just a laugh, a joke! Well! Roger thought he was wonderful, and so we put him on a box with some wheels, and wheeled him around. We finally filmed me up against a wall, and the two of us never came together—because if we had, you know, I would have towered over him! I don't know what I expected, but that's not what I expected!

**SS:** So it was pretty hard to film your death scene?

**BG:** Well, death is always hard. Especially with monsters. (Laughs) Trying to get them to do what they have to do so that you look like you're doing what you're supposed to be doing...

**SS:** And keeping a straight face at the same time.

**BG:** And keeping a straight face at the same time.

**SS:** Did you ever meet Paul Blaisdell, who made and played the monster?

**BG:** Yes, and I think I just kept my mouth shut! I mean, when you look at what they do today, and what we began with! That monster's a joke, when you see the special effects today.

**SS:** Corman's films always concentrated more on the story than the effects.

**BG:** Because of the budget. I mean, he couldn't afford special effects, so he had to go with the story.

**SS:** One of the best Corman films is *NOT OF THIS EARTH*.

**BG:** Well, that was the one with Paul Birch, with the glasses, with the eyes... I love that film. It had a lot of mystery to it, I thought.

**SS:** And you finally got to be a nurse, like you'd wanted.

**BG:** I got to be a nurse, and I did the sexy thing of putting on my stockings—that

was very sexy in those days—and then I had to wear a bathing suit! My God! What a stupid thing that was—but I thought it was a kick. I loved it. Paul Birch got very upset with Roger. The things he had to put in his eyes were just driving him crazy, you know? Nobody wore contacts in those days, and so, by the time the shooting was over, his eyes were just killing him. He just did not get along with Roger and Roger's enthusiasm and the long hours. He finally walked off the picture and we had to shoot his character from behind, because we had to get another man to replace him. But by that time we had filmed enough of him, I guess.

**SS:** You mentioned your sexy stockings scene. How severe was the 50s attitude toward sex in films?

**BG:** Oh, well, you couldn't show any cleavage. It was really something to show me putting a stocking on—I mean, my God, it was really, really something! Today, it's nothing. Madonna's sex book is out there and I imagine that it will sell millions of copies at 50 bucks, and I'm sure she's gonna laugh all the way to the bank. But I can remember doing live television—LUX THEATRE and PLAYHOUSE 90—and there was always a little lady backstage, and she had little pieces of lace to put in your cleavage! I mean, you could not show any cleavage; that was absolutely a no-no. Now, of course, you can do anything, and I almost resent it a bit. I mean, I'm really so tired of seeing people make love on the screen! I mean, it bores the living hell out of me! I don't think it's a spectator sport...

**SS:** Not usually! (Laughs)

**BG:** I really liked it when you saw them go into the room, shut the door, and then the waves crashed on the beach. I knew exactly what they were doing. Now, they want to be sure that I know what they're doing, so they let me see it all, and I'm really not interested.

**SS:** There's a Woody Allen film; it's set in Cairo and the two characters kiss and say, "Where are the crashing waves?"

**BG:** (Laughs) Or the wilted flowers, or whatever the hell they used to do!

**SS:** Your father would have been happy that you finally got to be a doctor in *CURUCU, BEAST OF THE AMAZON*. Was that shot on location?

**BG:** Yeah, in Brazil. We went to Sao Paulo, to Rio, and we were on the Amazon River. In fact, we shot on the Amazon on an old fishing boat and got caught on a sand bar and could not get off the river until 24 hours later. We swam over to another boat and got full of bugs and little things, and God, it was something else! There was no makeup man and no hairdresser, so I had to do all of that myself. And hot! It was so hot! And nobody spoke any English.

**SS:** Curt Siodmak was the director...

**BG:** Yeah. There were two things in that movie that were really outstanding. One was that they had this boa constrictor as long as my house, as long as my living room, I can tell you that. He was huge! Big, big boa constrictor, and he was supposed to wrap himself around me until I got away. They had two natives hold his tail and two natives hold his head; then they wrapped the snake around me. And so I got on the ground and screamed and screamed, and Curt Siodmak said, "Cut! Cut, cut, cut! Are you all right?" He's the only one who spoke English, the director. I said, "Curt? What is the matter?" And he said, "I just wanted to see if you're okay." I said, "Of course I'm okay! Let's get on with this damned thing!" So we continued and 20 years later he comes to my house and has coffee and he says, "You know, I've gotta give you a lot of credit. I was really worried about that snake, because if the boys had let go and the snake constricted, we could never have gotten you out of there. Because once the snake constricts, as you know, it can't unrestrict itself. It doesn't relax like a rubber band; it takes a long time for that constriction to go away and by that time you would have been dead. So I really give you a lot of credit for that." (Laughs)

**SS:** Nice of him to tell you...

**BG:** Lots of laughs, Curt Siodmak, you know? The other thing was a scene set in an Indian village. Well, we built it about three weeks before the scene was filmed, out of palm fronds and all the trash and crap that we could find. And, of course, by the time we filmed, it was dry as a matchstick. So we got in the middle of it and did all our scenes and we finished everything, and now it was

time to burn it down. So they threw the torches and John Bromfield and I were in the middle of this thing, and it blew! I mean it just blew, like a keg of dynamite! John and I stood there and I pushed him and he ran and I thought to myself, "Well, this is it. I'm gonna die. I'll never get out of here. I will never get out." That goes through your head in three seconds, but it seemed like a lifetime to me. I said, "You know, Beverly, you might as well try." And I ran! I got out, of course, but my eyebrows were singed, my eyelashes were singed . . . I mean, that's how close I got.

**SS:** *Wow! The danger of doing a non-union film!*

**BG:** (Laughs) It was something else! Probably one of the most interesting pictures I ever did, as far as just being able to survive! There were no honey wagons, you know, no place to go to the bathroom. There was a truck that came with rice and tea for lunch every day . . . I mean, it was tough time, baby.

**SS:** *Wow!*

**BG:** It was tough time! The location was the roughest I've ever, ever been on.

**SS:** *Let's talk about something just a little safer. You made THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE . . .*

**BG:** Well, THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE was wonderful fun. We had one alligator head and a very low budget, so naturally we had to have our star use the alligator head. When I went to the mansion where George Macready is the mad scientist, they wanted a lot of men walking up and down the halls, in different degrees of turning into an alligator. And it's very hard to do that if you don't have an alligator head, because of their big snouts. So they came up with this idea; they made these headpieces that were covered in white . . .

**SS:** *Instead of an alligator head.*

**BG:** . . . and they used them on the men who were walking up and down the corridors. I think part of the scene was cut out of the movie; you don't see it much. But when we filmed it, there were four or five men walking up and down the halls with these coverings over their heads, and when I opened the door and walked in they all looked like they had white urinals on their heads! Well, I laughed so hard and long that we had to break for lunch for an hour! I could not go back to work! Every time I opened the door and saw this, I just went off! But I thought it was an interesting movie; I thought it was well shot and well done. And, as an actress, I loved anything where I could get in the rain or the mud; I mean, I loved being a wreck.

**SS:** *You're a physical performer.*

**BG:** Maybe that's why people always hired me, because I loved being a wreck. I didn't give a damn about my makeup; I just loved

being a disaster. Being sopping wet, or going through the desert with no water, or whatever the hell it was.

**SS:** *No wonder Roger Corman loved working with you.*

**BG:** Yes, he did love working with me, because I was very gung ho; I was just like he was. That's why I loved SWAMP WOMEN, you know? When you can really be grungy and look like hell, I think that's the best! (Laughs)

**SS:** *Did you get along with Lon Chaney on THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE?*

**BG:** Oh, yes! He was wonderful! Great stories, and funny, and just fabulous!

**SS:** *He gave a great performance.*

**BG:** Yeah. He was wonderful. He liked that, too, you see; he liked going through all that rain and junk.

**SS:** *You appeared with another legendary horror star, Vincent Price, in TWICE TOLD TALES.*

**BG:** Oh, he's the best. He is just the best. I think he's one of the nicest men, nicest actors, I have ever met in my life. You cannot have a sweeter human being to work with than Vincent Price, and I think that I am probably one of a million who have said that.

**SS:** *Tell us about PRETTY POISON, in which you starred with Anthony Perkins and Tuesday Weld.*

**BG:** That was a wonderful movie and I loved it. It was way before its time. The whole drug thing was just coming into our culture and nobody really realized it. Great Barrington was a fabulous place to film; we stayed at a wonderful bed-and-breakfast and had the run of a huge old kitchen. It was just—I just loved it. Of course, the scene

that's cut out—in the back of the truck when I'm all bloody and dead and everything—that was my favorite part. (Laughs)

**SS:** *Most actresses would say, "Can we cut that?"*

**BG:** I loved that the best! I remember when Tuesday Weld killed me, I had to fall down these stairs. We filmed in this very old Victorian house and the stairs were very, very steep. So Noel Black, the director, said, "I want you to fall down these stairs and go all the way down, and then where it makes a turn, go on down to the bottom." And Tony Perkins said, "Gee, I don't know; I'm worried about Beverly doing that." And the director said, "What do you mean? We'll have the mattress down there." And Tony said, "Look, before she does it, let me try it, and if I can do it, then Beverly can do it." Now wasn't that nice?

**SS:** *That was marvelous.*

**BG:** So, he fell down. He pretended he died, and he fell down the stairs, and he said, "No, she can't; she can only go part of the way down. That's the only way you can really make it work, because it's too tough. I did it and I'm telling you." Now, isn't that a lovely story?

**SS:** *It's great. We hear so much about him being such an unhappy person . . .*

**BG:** I never knew whether Tony was unhappy, because he was working, and I respect how people are when they work. They're in another world; they're in another place; they're doing their thing. He was kind of unto himself, I will say that. He was very intense.

**SS:** *And it showed. The characterizations in PRETTY POISON were excellent.*

**BG:** I loved the mother. I played the mother as if she was very jealous of Tuesday Weld, of her daughter. Every time the daughter had a boyfriend, she wanted that boyfriend. So I brought





The star and the snake in *CURUCU, BEAST OF THE AMAZON* (1956). Director Curt Siodmak breathed a sigh of relief when the scene was over. Beverly breathed.



Beverly is flanked by Jacqueline deWit and Vincent Price in *TWICE-TOLD TALES* (1963), a Poe-man's version of three stories by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The film was an attempt to cash in on the Price/Roger Corman/Edgar Allan Poe series of hits from American International Pictures. The only things missing were Corman and Poe.



Beverly plays dead in *PRETTY POISON* (1968) for costars Anthony Perkins and Tuesday Weld. Scripted by Lorenzo Semple, Jr., the film was years ahead of its time. PREVIOUS PAGE: Beverly Garland and Richard Crane in *THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE* (1959).

another dimension to this woman that I felt was interesting and viable. The part was not big enough to be able to maneuver, but it gave it enough that you were interested in the lady.

**SS:** The audience saw that most of the daughter's problems really stemmed from the mother.

**BG:** That's right. I played her as though she were very resentful of Tuesday. She was getting older, and she didn't like that Tuesday was young and pretty. When Tony walked in, I made a play for him—in my own way. Whether that came across or not is not the point. There was enough; there was an undercurrent...

**SS:** That was a time in America when we started having thrill killings, these Charles Manson type of things, and in *PRETTY POISON* the thrill killer is a cute, All-American cheerleader...

**BG:** Time magazine wrote it up, and they were thinking that it should be put up for an Academy Award, but it was just too ahead of its time. Nobody understood it. Now they would understand it, easily.

**SS:** You had a good part, too, in *THE MAD ROOM* with Shelley Winters.

**BG:** Oh, yes! I'll never forget that scene when I kill myself; they had me all rigged up with tubing, so that when I stabbed myself the blood would come gushing out. Well, it was six o'clock at night, and the blood never gushed, and I had to keep doing the scene over and over—and I was very, very pregnant at the time. In fact, by the time we finished the bloody picture, I was six and a half months pregnant, and they had to find clothes that made me look like I wasn't pregnant. But I'll never forget trying to kill myself! I must have tried to kill myself from six until ten o'clock at night! Either the knife went in too fast, or the blood came out too

slow—I mean, we could never coordinate the damned thing!

**SS:** Then you probably had to change your costume...

**BG:** Oh, yes! We had to wash the thing; we had to change the set; we had to take the tubes out—but I really loved Shelley, and I thought she was wonderful to work with. It was fun. It was a good film, which they cut to ribbons. Barney Gerard, the director, took his name off it. They had just destroyed it; they had cut the living hell out of it, and it's just too bad.

**SS:** Let's turn to some of your TV work. You appeared on *TWILIGHT ZONE* and *THRILLER*....

**BG:** Rod Serling came up to me after we filmed *TWILIGHT ZONE*. I played a torch singer, and he came up to me and said, "You know, I wrote this thing, but I wanna tell you that you brought something to this torch singer that I never wrote. And I just have to thank you, because you have given this woman a dimension that I never knew was there." I thought that was one of the nicest compliments I ever got.

**SS:** Especially from an author.

**BG:** Especially from Rod Serling!

**SS:** The 1960s were your "sitcom wife" period. First with Bing Crosby...

**BG:** I did *THE BING CROSBY SHOW*, which I thought was very cute. I remember John Scott Trotter telling me I had to do an awful lot of singing. He played and I sang and he played and I sang, and finally he said to me, "You know, you have a range of exactly one note." (Laughs) I realized then that I wasn't going to be Barbra Streisand.

**SS:** But your costar was a great singer.

**BG:** Right! And we did a Christmas episode; I had to sit down at the piano and sing "White Christmas!" You know, it's very difficult to sing "White Christmas" with God standing there; I mean, it just doesn't work! I couldn't get it out; I couldn't get the first word out!

**SS:** What was Crosby like to work with?

**BG:** He was very subdued, very quiet and into himself. He was very hard to get to know; he just wasn't communicative at all. But, you know, I looked at some of those shows, and he is so relaxed and easy. He had a photographic memory. He'd come to work in the morning; he'd turn the 10 pages of script, or the 15 pages, and then put the book down and know the lines! He remembered every piece of music he had ever sung! You could hum a song and he would know the words to it; he would know the refrain and the whole thing. So he was a fascinating man, but very much into himself.

**SS:** Following the Crosby show, you wed Fred MacMurray on *MY THREE SONS*.

*Continued on page 96*



# VOICES OF DOOM

## BY BENNET POMERANTZ

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I am an enormous enthusiast of **BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES**. The show has taken most adults by storm. Not only is the animation above par compared to other animated weekday and Saturday morning cartoon shows, **BATMAN** also uses some unique vocal talent. Some of these remarkable and talented performers are also available on audiobooks.

Kevin Conroy, the vocalization behind Batman himself, chronicled two of John D. MacDonald's Travis McGee novels for Random House audio before Darren McGavin took over the narrating chores for the rest of the McGee series. In **CINNAMON SKIN** and **DARKER THAN AMBER**, listeners can hear the unique articulated styling that Mr. Conroy brings to these books. He gives an inner slant to the relationship between MacDonald's Travis McGee and his friend Meyer, which Darren McGavin never has done with the rest of the series. One also hears the beginning of the hard-edged tone, which Conroy now uses to perform Batman and Bruce Wayne, in his character voices.

When speaking of the linguistic proficiency of actor Roddy McDowall, the voice of the Mad Hatter on the Batman series, know that one is talking about one of the foremost narrators in the audio business. McDowall knows his way around a Neumann microphone (the microphone used in recording cartoons, radio ads, and audiobooks). He has recorded for several audiobook companies, such as Dove, Harper, and Bridge. On **TWILIGHT ZONE #3: THE ODYSSEY OF FLIGHT 33**, from Harper Audio, McDowall's subdued voice takes the audio listener on a journey through the inner components of dread. His narration is reminiscent of **TWILIGHT ZONE** creator Rod Serling. On the other hand, he fills each word with trepidation in L. Ron Hubbard's horror classic **FEAR** from Bridge Audio, painting a picture of a man who lost four hours of time and is haunted by demons. Strangely enough, McDowall has read the audionovel adaptation of the film **BATMAN** from Dove Audio. (He sounds so much like Jack Nicholson in the audio version, I had to reread the box to make sure it wasn't Jack.)

For both Mark Hamill (the Joker) and **STAR WARS** fans, Penguin Highbridge Audio will release the **STAR WARS RADIO SHOWS** to tape in late May. This 13-episode show (six and one-half hours) was originally broadcast on National Public Radio and uses the medium to its full advantage. This is achieved through the use of Ben Burt's amazing sound effects and John Williams's Oscar-winning score. A great radio cast includes Hamill as Luke Skywalker, Anthony Daniels reprising his role as See Threepio, Perry (RIPTIDE) King as Han Solo, and Brock (STAR TREK VI) Peters as Darth Vader. This **STAR WARS** is awe-inspiring and as memorable as the original film.

*Bennett Pomerantz is a regular contributor to Mystery Scene and Strange New Worlds.*

One thing about the personality of the Catwoman: it's gritty and stalwart. Adrienne Barbeau, who voices Catwoman, takes that tack with her audiobooks as well. She makes the listener take notice and holds one's interest until she is finished. Barbeau is currently narrating Anne McCaffrey's **Pern** series. She takes very few audio gambles with her narration; her characters are so well defined. This and her canny character development make it easy for any listener to enjoy these pieces.

Ed Asner (Roland Daggett) can narrate anything from biographies to mysteries, and provides voices for such cartoons as **BATMAN** and **CAPTAIN PLANET AND THE PLANETEERS**. (I have even heard an excellent version of **RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER** that the actor narrated for Wards department stores last Christmas.) Michael Crichton's **SPHERE**

(Random House) is a *tour de force* for Asner's vocal proficiency. This novel takes place in an undersea biosphere during an ecocatastrophe; Asner makes the listener feel totally compressed and enclosed. In **J. EDGAR HOOVER: THE MAN AND THE SECRETS** (Soundlex Publishing), Asner takes the tack of rendering the story as straight news narration, in the style of Dan Rather. Asner shows an ingenious gift for satire in Carl Hiaasen's humorous murder mystery **SKIN TWIST** (Random House).

Riddle me this: What does horror author Clive Barker and the Riddler have in common? If you said actor John Glover, you're right! Score two points! Glover orates a modern-day fable, **THE THIEF OF ALWAYS**, from Harper Audio. At the Holiday House, you can get your every wish made real, but there is always a steep price tag. Glover knows when to twist the verbal knife of the Barker text and makes you squirm with anticipation.

Before Mark Hamill was cast as the Joker, **BATMAN**'s producers had selected Tim Curry for the role. It didn't work out, but that doesn't mean I can't discuss his audio ventures. In the film **HOME ALONE 2: LOST IN NEW YORK**, Curry played the Plaza Hotel's concierge. He narrates Kevin McCallister's New York adventure on tape (Harper Audio), and his charisma is ingenious. Even after seeing the movie and knowing what will happen, Curry's prepossessing narration makes this critic want to hear the tale again. Curry also uses his vocal chicanery to bring the mystery tales of Martha Grimes to life. His suave oration of **THE DIRTY DUCK** (Simon & Schuster Audio) makes you feel involved in the case with Grimes' sardonic curmudgeon, Inspector Richard Jury. Curry's ingenious verbal tricks also kept me interested in the unfathomable Anne Rice audio, **CRY TO HEAVEN**, from Random House Audiobooks.

Well, that's a wrap for my tribute to some of the audio voices behind **BATMAN**. These audios are available in book stores and libraries. So until next time, this is Bennett Pomerantz for Voices of Doom . . . Happy Nightmares!



*Joker's face, Hamill's voice*

# Sherlock Holmes Meets The Twilight Zone

An appraisal of Granada's new feature-length films

## The Last Vampyre and The Eligible Bachelor

by David Stuart Davies

Indeed, our Sherlock has wandered far from the realms of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in these two *outré* pieces from Granada Television International. He travels through the haunted territory of the mind, where vampires and horrid dreams threaten to overcome that powerful intellect.

Draw the curtains, toss another wooden stake on the fire, and let me tell you all. *THE LAST VAMPYRE*, very loosely based on Conan Doyle's "The Sussex Vampire," is a dark, Gothic piece with more than a touch of the Hammer Horrors about it. Actually, the opening scene, set in 1792, filled with angry villagers brandishing burning torches and, in misjudged retribution, setting fire to the inevitable big house, has been the standard fare of horror films for ages, not the least of these being Hammer's *COUNTESS DRACULA* (1970), the screenplay of which was penned by Jeremy Paul, the writer of *VAMPYRE*. Indeed, Paul admitted to me that, subconsciously, he wrote the same opening scene, and only

when he saw the preview of *THE LAST VAMPYRE* did he realise what he'd done.

Being a Sherlock Holmes film, *VAMPYRE* does not contain any genuine representatives of the Undead. ("This world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply.") Instead, we are given Stockton (chillingly played by Roy Marsden of *Dagleish* fame), who convinces the superstitious villagers of Lamberley that he slips out at night for a slurp of blood. What Paul really presents with this newly-conceived character is a "mind vampire," one who, by sheer force of will and character, drains off another's energy, enslaving his victim in the process. It is an intriguing idea, which Conan Doyle wrote about in his novella *The Parasite*. In that story, published in 1894, a West Indian medium, Miss Penelosa, gradually takes over the mind of a man she desires. It is a fascinating study of possession, power, and evil, but equally fascinating (not to say uncanny) is the fact that Jeremy Paul had



**LEFT:** Sherlock Holmes (Jeremy Brett) almost falls under the spell of Stockton (Roy Marsden), who may very well be *THE LAST VAMPYRE*. **RIGHT:** Greedy Lord St. Simon (Simon Williams), *THE ELIGIBLE BACHELOR*, proposes marriage to the wealthy Hettie Doran (Paris Jefferson), but is it only her hand he desires?



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**LEFT:** Reverend Merridew (Maurice Denham, in a role originally offered to Peter Cushing) calls upon Holmes and Watson and begs them to investigate the weird occurrences in his village. **CENTER:** The Baker Street duo enters the case too late to save the life of a baby. Bob and Carlotta Ferguson (Keith Barron and Yolanda Vazquez) are the grieving parents; the lightly-veiled Dolores (Juliette Aubrey) is their servant. **RIGHT:** Crippled young Jack Ferguson (Richard Dempsey) harbors a dark secret or two.

never heard of the book, let alone read it. Surely, this is a case of one writer tapping into another's wavelength.

Sherlock Holmes is called to Lamberley (whose move from Sussex is due to the Cotswold stone houses featured in the film) by the vicar (Maurice Denham) because of the strange influence Stockton seems to have over the village: The blacksmith (Andy Abrahams) suffers rather a nasty haemorrhage after a confrontation with the newcomer, and the baby son of Bob Ferguson (Keith Barron) dies mysteriously the day after Stockton had dined with the family. All rather flimsy stuff to warrant Holmes' attention. On a good day, we can imagine the acerbic sleuth showing the reverend the door pretty quickly, but, it would seem, cases of real interest are very thin on the ground.

Once in the village, Holmes does a great deal of observing, but not much detective work. He is nearly drawn into Stockton's sphere of influence and on one occasion is almost convinced that he sees a ghost. Thankfully, a logical, if not fully credible, reason is proffered for this aberration.

The Great Detective is a little out of his depth and, as a result, both he and the viewers are left feeling uneasy. HAMLET-like, the set is littered with corpses when the disappointing dénouement is reached. As in the original tale, Ferguson's son, Jack (a superb performance from 19-year-old Richard Dempsey) turns out to be the major culprit, but those unfamiliar with the story are likely to be confused as to his motive. It is fair to say that this macabre mélange failed to fully satisfy: it was neither Sherlockian nor vampiric enough.

Jeremy Brett, as Holmes, now seems to have more of the baker's snoop than Baker Street about his shape. No longer the emaciated beanpole of the early episodes, he appears to be in danger of turning into Sherlock's brother, Mycroft. Having said that, it must be admitted that Brett remains a mesmerizing performer, partnered with the essence of Watsonhood, Edward Hardwicke. As such, they remain a fairly unbeatable team. However, I would like to see evidence of the duo enjoying each other's company.

Brett is a little leaner in *THE ELIGIBLE BACHELOR*. This film, the more enjoyable of the two, is another strange piece. Cer-

tainly, the timbers of the original story are recognisable, but, watching it, I was reminded of Holmes' remark in "The Empty House": "There are some trees, Watson, which grow to a certain height and then suddenly develop some unsightly eccentricity."

The main ingredient added to the recipe by writer Trevor Bowen is Holmes' disturbing dreams, nightmares filled with weird images of torn chairs, a strange creature reaching toward him through a mass of cobwebs, and flashes of the climactic tumble into the Reichenbach Falls with Professor Moriarty. The dreams disturb and unbalance the detective. No doubt his perturbation stems from his inability to apply rationality to these hallucinatory experiences. There are some revealing moments and tantalising titbits concerned with Holmes' unease: Watson, suspecting cocaine at work again, checks the desk drawer to see if the neat Morocco case, containing the hypodermic syringe, is still there, unused—it is. Also, we see Holmes, awakening from one of the *cauchemares*, clutching a picture of Jesus Christ!

It turns out that there is a kind of dubious logic to these dreams. The Moriarty element is connected with Holmes' despair at ever finding another antagonist who possesses the same challenging intellectual and cunning qualities as the much-missed Professor: "All I deal with now is Pygmies."

The other images are, in pure Sherlockian terms, harder to accept, for they relate to the Lord St. Simon affair: They are pre-cognitive visions. Now, it seems, Holmes is able to dream up clues and solutions to his cases! This is a fascinating premise, but not the kind we expect to find in a Sherlock Holmes tale.

I will spare you further details concerning the intricacies of the newly-fashioned plot. The dramatic dénouement, which takes place at Glaven Castle, the semiderelict country seat of Lord St. Simon, has all the grandeur and darkly risible elements of grand

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opera. This crumbling pile, it seems, contains the menagerie of  
Stoke Moran as well as a shambling, bespectacled murderer  
flaunting a pronged garden weeder. (Echoes of Basil Rathbone's  
1944 Holmes film, *THE SCARLET CLAW*!)

*THE ELIGIBLE BACHELOR* is directed with real style and eye-popping opulence by reflection-freak Peter Hammond. The performances are excellent: Simon Williams, as Lord St. Simon, makes an effectively smooth and despicable villain; Paris Jeffer son is a beautiful and credible Hettie Doran; and Anna Calder-Marshall is suitably tortured, in both senses of the word, as the veiled lady. Special mention must be made of Joanna McCallum for her gutsy and compelling interpretation of the drunken and lovelorn actress, Flora Miller.

*THE ELIGIBLE BACHELOR* (a face-tious title change) is the better of the two films, if only because Sherlock Holmes is allowed some detective work. Although we miss Colin Jeavons as Inspector Lestrade (apparently he is away at Leamington Spa taking the waters), we do have Rosalie Williams, alternately imperious and tearful, as Mrs. Hudson.

Serious Sherlockians and Doyleans have been rather dismayed by the lack of fidelity to the Canon in these two Granada shows, but, though not proffering a unanimous thumbs up, I consider them to be interesting and entertaining contributions to the genre. However, I would offer this advice: Next time, let's

see a thinner Holmes who is more agreeable to his Watson and his landlady, along with a story that avoids the sensational and, instead, challenges and puzzles, affording the world's greatest detective some real detective work.

*Lord St. Simon* (Simon Williams) has lost a bride and, for once, it's not of his own doing. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's original short story, published in 1891's *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, was called "The Noble Bachelor." Granada toyed with *THE MISTRESS OF GLAVEN* before settling on *THE ELIGIBLE BACHELOR*. No noblesse oblige?



SCARLET STREET 49

# I Was a Teenage Vampyre

## Richard Dempsey

### Interviewed by Jessie Lilley

The decision by Granada last year to produce only two-hour adaptations of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's classic Sherlock Holmes stories resulted first in *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER*, a stunningly rendered version of the tale "Charles Augustus Milverton." Granada immediately planned two followups: adaptations of "The Sussex Vampire" and "The Noble Bachelor," which ultimately wound up on British television screens as *THE LAST VAMPIRE* and *THE ELIGIBLE BACHELOR*. Unlike the case of "Charles Augustus Milverton" and *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER*, "The Sussex Vampire" and "The Noble Bachelor" contain very little background material for scriptwriters to embroider upon, but several Conan Doyle characters do make the difficult transition to film—among them the boy Jack Ferguson, the crippled "innocent" of "The Sussex Vampire." Jack is played by blonde, curly-topped Richard Dempsey, perhaps best remembered as one of the child stars of Wonderworks' *THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE*, adapted from *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis. Recently, the talented young actor took a brief break from his college studies to talk to *Scarlet Street's* publisher about his experiences with Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson....

**Scarlet Street:** Was there much competition for the part of Jack Ferguson in Granada's *THE LAST VAMPIRE*?

**Richard Dempsey:** I'm not sure, actually. I got it 'cause I was originally up for a soap opera that Granada was doing, and it didn't work out; then they called me back for the part of Jack.

**SS:** Which soap opera?

**RD:** It was called *FAMILIES*. It's a Manchester/Australian soap opera, and I was up for a regular part in that, before I decided to go to college. I think the casting director thought of me, and she got me back a few weeks later and I met the Sherlock Holmes people.

**SS:** So you auditioned again for *THE LAST VAMPIRE*?

**RD:** Yeah.

**SS:** How many times?

**RD:** I think two!

**SS:** Are you a fan of Sherlock Holmes?

**RD:** Well, I must say, I haven't watched the series, and I hadn't read the books until I was auditioning. Then I managed to get a copy of the last film they'd done, *THE MASTER BLACKMAILER*; after seeing it, I was very much interested. The story was wonderful and the whole production was very impressive. And, of course, Jeremy Brett was exciting to watch, as I'd never seen any sort of interpretation of Sherlock Holmes at all.

**SS:** Did you read "The Sussex Vampire" to get an idea of the story?

**RD:** Once I'd got the part, yeah. It's quite different, isn't it, from the adaptation?

**SS:** Were you pleased with it?

**RD:** Oh, yeah! Very much so; I think it's great. It's really exciting to watch, 'cause it was three months' work, I think, and then to see the complete thing was really exciting.

**SS:** How much rehearsal time did you have?

**RD:** Well, I had to play the violin, and limp as well...

**SS:** Right.

**RD:**... so I had more rehearsals than other people. We had about two weeks' rehearsal before we went off on location.

**SS:** Do you play the violin?

**RD:** Not at all, no. I started to learn when I was about nine, I think, and gave up very quickly. The idea was to teach me how to hold a violin and look like I could play it, rather than actually play it. I had a double for the actual scene; you just see the bow on the violin, and he actually played it. I learned how to play it without the sound; I had a bow without any resin on it.

**SS:** Is a three-month shooting schedule standard for British television?

**RD:** Well, I don't know. I think it's pretty good. I think Granada's good about spending a lot of time on special things like this. After I did *THE LAST VAMPIRE*, I did another two-hour television special, and it took six weeks. I think it depends on the type or the size of the production.

**SS:** Now, what show is this?

**RD:** It's called *ANNA LEE*. It's a new detective thing. You know the Inspector Morse series that we have here?

**SS:** Yes.

**RD:** Well, that's finished now. This, I think, is intended to replace it. We

made a television film based on the novel by Liza Cody. It stars Imogen Stubbs.

**SS:** Yes.

**RD:** She plays Anna Lee, a sort of new-age, female private detective. She's lazy and slobby; she's not an average stereotype of a detective. It's her first case. She's been working for the Metropolitan Police, and she's given it up because of all the bureaucracy, and joins a private agency. To start her off, they give her a missing person case, which turns out to be slightly more than a missing-person case. It gets very dramatic, gets sort of sad, actually. I play the would-be boyfriend of the missing person. He never really gets his way and she's not very interested, so he develops a crush on Anna Lee. And after he's interviewed, he continues to visit her. Eventually, his involvement in the case becomes more important, but it will be giving too much away if I tell you more.

**SS:** It sounds very exciting.

**RD:** You know, it was directed by Colin Bucksey, who does *L.A. LAW*.

**SS:** How old were you when you began to work as an actor?

**RD:** I did my first professional job at 14, which was *THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA*, the C.S. Lewis books. I was Peter, the oldest boy. I did that for the BBC for two years. I was very short and had straight hair and now, when people see things like *ANNA LEE* and so on, they don't believe it's me, because I'm six-foot-one and I've got curly hair. Which wasn't intended; it was just that when I hit the pubescent stage in my life, all my hormones exploded and I ended up with curly hair.

**SS:** Then you're not brandishing a curling iron every morning?

**RD:** Exactly! (Laughs)

**SS:** What are some of your other credits?



Richard Dempsey

Photo by Peter Simpkin



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**LEFT:** A boy's best friend is his lion. Richard Dempsey first came to the public's attention as Peter in 1989's *THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE*. **RIGHT:** The West End's *INTO THE WOODS* was a Stephen Sondheim musical combining several classic fairy tales. On the London stage, Dempsey played Jack of beanstalk fame. **BELOW:** The pilot episode of the new mystery series, *ANNA LEE*, in which Dempsey appeared with Imogen Stubbs, proved to be a great success with British viewers.

**RD:** Oh, I did *INTO THE WOODS*, the Stephen Sondheim musical, in the West End. I did Jack in London, which was an enormous ambition of mine, to do a Sondheim show.

**SS:** What is your favorite role?

**RD:** Oh, gosh, I'd have to say Jack in *INTO THE WOODS*. It was a very special time for me, because it was the West End, and it was very much an ambition of mine to do that sort of thing. I'd say Jack, and Peter from Narnia, too, because it was my first professional role.

**SS:** Let's get back to *THE LAST VAMPIRE*. There was concern at Granada over expanding a short story to fit a two-hour time slot. Were there any on-set script changes, or changes made during the rehearsal period?

**RD:** There weren't, actually. After I did *THE LAST VAMPIRE*, I did *ANNA*

*LEE* and another television film, and there were constant script changes, which was a shock.

**SS:** Where were the scenes in Stockton's ruined house filmed?

**RD:** Oh, gosh. It was either in Manchester or the West Country. We did a lot of filming in the Cotswolds during the summer. It was gorgeous just to be there in the countryside when it was sunny. I think his house was in that area.

**SS:** Being a show about supernatural manifestations, the script called for a lot of wind and rain and ghostly sobbing. Did you provide your own sobs?

**RD:** Yes. I actually lost my voice for a weekend after doing the screaming scene. That's one of the things that convinced me that I needed to train. I'd never had any vocal training, and I had to play the scene in which Jack sees, in his head, Stockton's death; I had to run up to my room and jump in my bed, and scream, 'cause I could actually see, in my head, what's happening. We shot it a few times; it was one of the first scenes I shot, and luckily it was on the Friday and I was not working over the weekend. I couldn't speak for a day; I screamed so much.

**SS:** Was it fun working with Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke?

**RD:** Yes, an absolute pleasure. They were so much fun. Very, very much down-to-earth. Very professional and very fun-

ny. Like I said, I hadn't seen the series before, but I knew both of them as actors, and so when it actually came to work with them, it was just a joy, really.

**SS:** Did anything happen during the filming that you'd care to tell us about? Or, for that matter, did anything happen that you *wouldn't* care to tell us about?

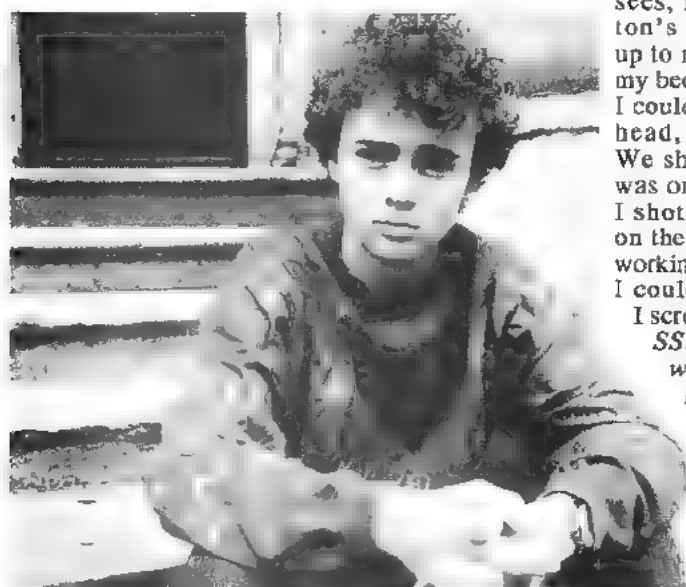
**RD:** Oh, let me think. I have a dreadful limp in *THE LAST VAMPIRE*, 'cause Jack's injured by falling out of a tree and developing a spinal injury. I did an awful lot of work with the movement teacher from the Royal Shakespeare Company; we developed certain ways of getting the limp. But in the end, the only option was to put a stone in my shoe—which was very, very painful for three months.

**SS:** Oh, no!

**RD:** But it worked! What I got was a little—not a stone, really, but a very small plastic pot. I think it had jam in it or something like that, and I'd stick it in my boot. I'd just shudder through my scene and then whip it out afterwards. But it worked. You know, it made me limp! (Laughs)

**SS:** Have you anything on the horizon?

**RD:** I've been offered a film for the Easter period, but I haven't said if I'll do it or not; it's dependent on whether the school will let me. This is the way my life is going at the moment; and I've just made a conscious decision not to do any work for the next year. If this job works out in my holidays, well, that's the only way I'd be able to do it. I'm at a stage where I'm learning an awful lot and taking enormous pleasure in it. College is great; it's just the best educational experience I've ever had, and I really hate missing any time.



# Mystery in Mouseland

## Disney's THE HARDY BOYS

by Michael Mallory

**T**he mid-1950s in America: It was the best of times and the worst of times. The shooting wars had ended, yet an invisible "Red Menace" seemingly lurked behind every bush. The postwar prosperity boom was still strong, but growing juvenile delinquency threatened to upset the balance. Education prospered, though the regular lesson plans included how to duck and cover in case of nuclear attack. The days of care-free youth were over . . .

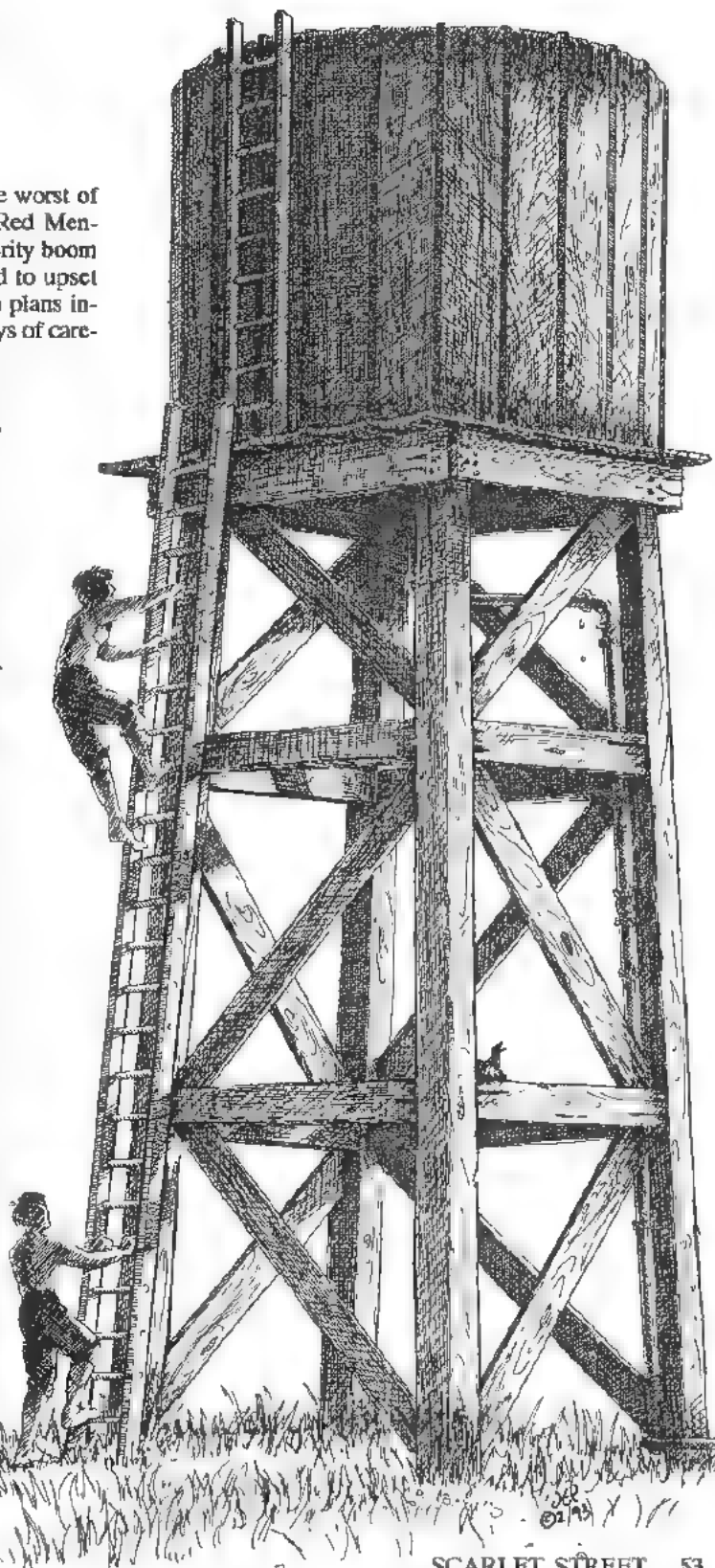
Much of the popular entertainment reflected the troubled currents of the time, either realistically (1955's *THE BLACKBOARD JUNGLE*) or metaphorically (1956's *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*), but one Hollywood producer steadfastly clung to the homespun innocence of an earlier age. His name was Walt Disney.

Disney obviously knew what he was doing; *THE MICKEY MOUSE CLUB*, which premiered October 3, 1955, became a phenomenal hit. It was a show that had something for every taste: music, comedy, cartoons, learning and guidance, and adventure. This last ingredient came in the form of serialized stories shown each day in 11-minute episodes. The first batch of serials, *WHAT I WANT TO BE*, the popular *SPIN AND MARTY*, and *CORKY AND WHITE SHADOW*, had been straight adventure stories. For the next one, the emphasis changed to thrills, chills, and mystery.

The Hardy Boys—Frank and Joe—had long been a fictional staple of red-blooded American boys, and probably girls, too (at least my sisters read them). Scores of novels were ground out by anonymous authors working under the Stratemeyer Syndicate house pseudonym of Franklin W. Dixon, all set in a Neverland version of small-town America. The Hardy Boys adventures were naturals for *MOUSE CLUB*'s adventure segment.

Disney's 20-chapter *MYSTERY OF THE APPLGATE TREASURE* was based on the very first Hardy Boy novel, *The Tower Treasure*, published in 1927. The casting of the leads could not have been better. Tim Considine, 15 years old and fresh from *SPIN AND MARTY*, played Frank, the older and more level-headed of the two. Tommy Kirk (14) played Joe, by turns impetuous and thoughtful, and usually the one who landed them both in trouble. Elaborate sets of the creepy Applegate house and a dilapidated water tower that would feature in the climax were erected on a Disney sound stage, and director Charles Haas shot quickly but effectively from Jackson Gillis' script.

The opening chapter, which premiered October 1, 1956, was a teaser of what would follow. The action began in earnest with Episode Two, entitled *THE STRANGER*. Further episodes were *A REAL CASE*, *THE FIRST CLUE*, *THE FUGITIVE*, *APPLGATE'S GOLD*, *DIG FOR TREASURE*, *A PIRATE'S CHEST*.





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(2) Frank and Joe Hardy, the teenaged sons of noted private detective (and frequently absent father) Fenton Hardy (Russ Conway), live in Bayport, a normal American small town somewhere on the outskirts of "the City." Fenton is widowed, so his sister, Gertrude (Sarah Selby), takes care of the men-folk. The other woman in the boys' lives is pesky adolescent Iola Morton (Carole Ann Campbell), the doctor's daughter, who has a penchant for stirring up mystery, just for kicks. Bored stiff with Bayport, Frank and Joe are dying to be let in on one of their father's cases, but Dad only patronizes their desire

(3) It's just not Iola Morton's day. First she has a roller-skating collision with a stranger, young Perry Robinson (Donald MacDonald); a little later, her purse is stolen right in front of the Applegate property. Iola's screams summon Joe Hardy, who thinks this is just another of her "mystery games," (4) until Frank arrives and finds the purse nearby. Now the boys believe her story, and Joe is elated—at last, here's a real mystery!

The chief suspect is Perry, who is on work probation from reform school and bunking in old Silas Applegate's garage in return for his chores. Applegate's plumber, Jackley (Bob Foulk), is also suspicious of Perry and instigates a search of the boy's room, (5) which turns up a box of Jackley's tools. The police are called in, but Joe Hardy first locates the frightened Perry and hears his confession: Perry did take Iola's purse, but only to retrieve something valuable of his that she had inadvertently picked up after their collision. He hands an old coin over to Joe for safe-keeping, and then gives himself up to the police. Upon closer inspection, the coin is seen to be solid gold!

(6) In a rare visit to the Bayport library, the brothers identify the coin as a Spanish doubloon. They also learn about the mysterious Applegate Treasure, which everyone else in town considers a joke. But, convinced that the treasure is real, Joe and Frank sneak onto the property after dark (7), armed with digging tools and Perry's instructions. No doubloons are found, but the boys discover a freshly dug trench in Applegate's yard, the handiwork of another. In the dirt are footprints, but they are much too small to belong to Jackley, the only person with a logical reason to dig a trench. Suddenly, charging out of the darkness comes old man Applegate himself (Florenz Ames), brandishing a deadly pirate cutlass!

When Joe confesses to a treasure hunt, the old man becomes strangely benign and invites them into his house (8), which is just as creepy on the inside as it is on the outside. Applegate tells the boys how his great-grandfather obtained 3,000 doubloons from pirate Jean Lafitte, and shows them an empty treasure chest, claim-

ing that the money was stolen 10 years ago, about the time of his former gardener's disappearance. Suddenly Applegate demands to know why they have become so interested. In their hurry to get away from the old man, Frank and Joe leave their digging tools behind. Then a chuckling, shabby figure in seaman's clothes creeps out of the bushes and takes the tools.

(9) The next morning Applegate is outraged to find his yard ruined with digging, and, in the midst of it, a shovel labeled Hardy. The boys are innocent, but the only way to prove it is to identify the mystery digger. To do that, they need to retrieve the shovel and check it for fingerprints, but they can't risk being caught on Applegate's property again. Joe manages to talk Iola into fetching the tools for them.

(10) That night the fetching Iola is not alone: Jackley is skulking around the Applegate property. As the plumber investigates a noise in the tower of Applegate's house, he is sapped on the head by an unseen assailant, then bound and gagged (11).

Frightened by a noise in the eerie darkness, Iola races to the tower and hides inside. She hears sounds from the supposedly vacant rooms above; before she can do anything, someone slams the door, locking her in.

Frank and Joe, meanwhile, realize that Iola has been gone too long, and they investigate. They find the girl in the locked tower and also discover the unconscious Jackley. (12)

Fenton Hardy and Applegate are now at the scene, trying to sort out all the confusion. Iola maintains that she heard a noise

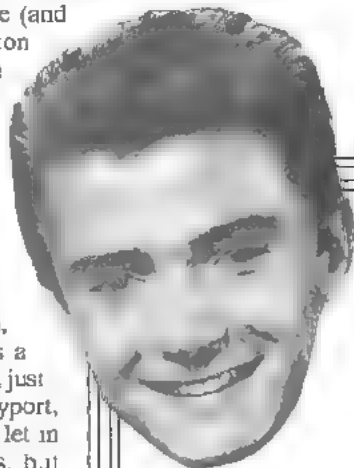
upstairs in the tower and, poking around, Dad Hardy finds and captures the strange seaman. It is Boles (Arthur Shields), Applegate's former gardener and suspected treasure thief.

(13) A gold coin and a letter are hidden in a secret compartment in the heel of Boles' shoe, which he tries to hide from the authorities. (14) With no real charges against him, Boles is about to be released. Just then, Joe Hardy has a thought: Boles' shoes should be checked against the footprint they found by the trench. At the mention of shoes, Boles becomes nervous and quickly confesses to digging up Applegate's yard.

(15) The Hardy Boys still smell a rat, and they discover the trick heel and the letter inside, which reads, "Applegate's treasure is in the old tower wall." (16) The letter is from a state prisoner named Jenkins, who lived in the boarding house when Boles worked for Applegate. Word of this discovery quickly leaks out, and the normally sane people of Bayport succumb to "Treasure Fever."

(17) The police search for the treasure in the walls of Applegate's tower rooms and turn up nothing. (18) but the Hardy Boys refuse to give up. They follow Boles to his boarding house, located near an old dilapidated water tower, and Joe has a sudden flash: The treasure note never specified the "tower" as being the one in Applegate's house—it could be the water tower!

(19) They are not the only ones to make the connection. Waiting for Boles in his room, and very unfriendly, is Jackley, who is really Jenkins' former cell-mate and the courier of the letter to Boles. He also realizes that the gold is in the tower when he sees the boys prowling around.



Tommy Kirk

Tim Considine





"WE'VE FOUND THE PASSAGE!"

The House on the Cliff

Frontispiece (Page 143)

Pictured above is Walter S. Rogers' frontispiece from the original 1927 edition of Franklin W. Dixon's *The House on the Cliff*, recently published in facsimile by Applewood Books. The first "Franklin W. Dixon" (a Stratemeyer Syndicate house name) was Leslie McFarlane.

(20) Inside the rotting water tower, the boys find sacks filled with gold coins—the entire Applegate treasure. Jackley suddenly appears, stuffs the gold inside his jacket, dropping his Mr. Nice Guy act in the process. A struggle breaks out, during which Frank is nearly thrown from the tower. But the weak tower floor gives way under the gold-weighted Jackley, and he becomes stuck in the hole.

A police patrol, having noticed the commotion on the water tower, arrives to rescue the boys and arrest the ex-con Applegate's treasure is returned to him, Perry Robinson is exonerated, and the Hardy Boys are hailed as true detectives.

Eerie atmosphere, clever direction, and good acting by all make *THE MYSTERY OF THE APPLIGATE TREASURE* a superior Disney serial. Considine and Kirk are very believable as brothers, with Kirk shining in the more flamboyant role. Considine plays Frank coolly and seriously, though part of that serious demeanor was the result of the young actor's having to cope with new braces on his teeth. Of the supporting cast, Florenz Ames is a stand-out as batty old Applegate. He plays what could have been a run-of-the-mill comic grouch role with humanity and a pervading

sense of loneliness. The biggest name in the cast is Irish actor Arthur Shields, who, like his brother Barry Fitzgerald, was a veteran of Dublin's Abbey Players.

*THE MYSTERY OF THE APPLIGATE TREASURE* was successful enough to warrant a sequel, so the residents of Bayport were brought back the following year for *THE MYSTERY OF GHOST FARM*.

This time screenwriter Jackson Gillis created his own mystery, rather than adapting a Hardy Boys novel, and the results were less than thrilling. *GHOST FARM* has none of the intricate plotting, action, or atmosphere of its predecessor; no elaborate studio sets; and barely any mystery. (Gillis was in much finer form years later, writing for *COLUMBO*.)

Though the plot lacked complexity, the relationship between Frank and Joe Hardy did not. *GHOST FARM* has moments of real conflict between the brothers, prompted by Frank discovering the opposite sex in a big way and starting to outgrow his younger brother's detective games.

Considine and, particularly, Kirk managed to instill some genuine teen angst into their portrayals. On paper, young Joe's lament, "The real trouble in the world today is girls. If you ever catch me wasting my time with girls, shoot me!" is cutesy stuff. But Tommy Kirk's reading of that line is surprisingly powerful. He shows the panic and anguish of a young man who feels he is being replaced in his brother's life by other people and other interests. Whether the writer intended it or not, we are watching the boys face their most perilous adventure yet: growing up.

Many from the *APPLIGATE* cast were back: Carole Ann Campbell, Russ Conway, Sarah Selby, even Florenz Ames, who pops up in a cameo. Western specialist R. G. Springsteen took over the direction.

The opening teaser episode aired September 30, 1957, and the story covered 14 more chapters: *BEGINNING THE PUZZLE*, *DETECTIVE JOE, WHO FEEDS THE CAT?*, *TWO PRIVATE EYES*, *THE MAN NAMED FRED*, *ANIMALS IN DANGER*, *CATCHING A GHOST*, *THE GHOST SPEAKS*, *LACEY'S WONDERFUL WILL*, *DETECTIVES IN TROUBLE*, *THE GHOST CONFESSES*, *IOLA TO THE RESCUE*, *PANIC AT THE ZOO*, and *UNCLE BILLY'S SECRET* (though in the dialogue, "Uncle Billy" is referred to as "Cousin Billy").

(2) Very reluctantly, Joe Hardy agrees to bike out to the country with Iola Morton to get her sister some goat's milk. On the way back, he manages to crash his bike, bending his front wheel and breaking the milk bottle. When the two hear a goat bleating from a nearby farm, they decide to ask the farmer for fresh milk.

(3) The farm is populated with goats, sheep, a burro, and a horse, all of which look skinny and unfed, but there seems to be no people around. The deserted farm house is run-down and creepy, yet someone has been in recently to give fresh milk to the cat.

Spooked by the place, Iola high-tails it out, running into Mr. Binks (Hugh Sanders) on the road. Binks, a rather intimidating insurance man who has a financial interest in the farm, tells her to keep off the property. Further down the road, Iola stops and calls Frank—catching him in a rare moment when he isn't on the phone with one of his girlfriends—and tells him that Joe is stranded at the farm with a broken wheel. Blood being thicker than hormones, Frank rushes to the rescue.

(4) A neighboring farmer named Sam (Bob Amsberry) tells Frank that the deserted farm was owned by a strange man named Lacey, who was recently killed in an upstate timber fire. Frank finds Joe in Lacey's farmhouse, but noises from the supposedly deserted upstairs frighten the boys away. (5) Fleeing the property, they run into Eric Burson (John Baer), a distant cousin of Lacey's. The farm, he tells them, was built by Lacey's brother, Billy (whose namesake is the pugnacious farm goat, "Cousin Billy's Billy"),



and he jokes about the place being haunted. Eric is about to inherit the farm and hires the boys to feed the animals; the boys, however, see him as a "client." As they are about to leave, Joe notices that his bent bike wheel has been mysteriously fixed. The Ghost of Lacey Farm is certainly helpful.

(6) From dotty old Mr. Bray, the zookeeper (John Harmon), the boys learn of a mysterious man named Fred who takes away sick or unwanted animals and destroys them. He has already been dispatched to Lacey's farm. (7) Rushing back to the farm to feed the animals, the boys discover that they have already been fed—it's the helpful ghost again. (8) They stay into the evening to try to trap the ghost, but (9) the ghost catches them instead. The "ghost" is an old man (Andy Clyde) who clucks over a sampler on the farmhouse wall that used to delight old Billy. It reads, "Take care of all of God's creatures and they will take care of you." The "ghost" also presents something to Joe: Old Lacey's will, which (10) gives Eric Burson the farm in return for his using Lacey's life-insurance premium to feed the animals.

In light of this document, Mr. Binks, whose gorgeous blonde daughter (Yvonne Lime) just might make Frank forget he's a detective, agrees to cancel Fred's service, commenting that the

document must be genuine, because no one in his right mind would forge something in purple ink. Joe Hardy begins to panic: Somewhere on Lacey's farm he lost his fountain pen containing . . . purple ink.

(11) The next day, the boys find a blotched first draft of the will, written with Joe's pen, at the farmhouse. They phone their dad to tell him that the will is a forgery, but he startles them by saying it has been authenticated—it is Lacey's handwriting!

(12) The "ghost" reappears and confesses that he is indeed Lacey, just pretending to be dead. The boys convince him to turn himself in and set the matter straight. Lola conveniently shows up and the boys commandeer her bike for Lacey to ride into town.

The girl's anger at having been ditched is soon forgotten when she spots Farmer Sam and Fred (Paul Wexler) loading Lacey's animals into a truck. Fred, it seems, is taking his orders from a secret boss, will or no will.

(13) Sneaking into the back of Fred's truck, Lola rides into town with the animals and flags down Joe. They release the animals from the truck, and (14) it's animals, animals everywhere on the streets of Bayport, bursting through fences, prompting double-takes, and wreaking havoc.

# Not Quite Hardy Enough <sup>by</sup> Richard Valley

Frank was the older lad, about 16 in the year of his first recorded adventure. He had straight black hair, brown eyes; and a "firm, yet good-humored expression" on his face. Joe, a year younger than his brother, had the same good-humored expression, but he was pink-checked, with curly blonde hair and blue eyes.

The two youths lived with their mother and father in Bayport, a city whose 50,000 citizens prospered a mere three miles from the Atlantic Ocean, on Barnet Bay. Fenton Hardy, their 40-year-old father, was "an internationally famous detective" who had made a name for himself on the force in New York City. Mother, of course, was a homemaker.

In the first chapter of their first adventure, *The Tower Treasure*, the Hardy Boys, riding to nearby Willowville on their motorcycles, were nearly run off the road by a "speed demon."

In the second chapter, Frank and Joe arrived at the home of their school "chum," cheery, chubby farmboy Chet Morton, only to learn that Chet's "roadster" had been stolen.

The year was 1927.

\*\*\*

Today, had they lived, the Hardy Boys would be well into their 80s.

Oh, the Hardy Boys survived their first adventure, to be sure, and went on to have dozens more before their untimely demise. There are even those—specifically, Simon & Schuster, who currently hold the copyright on the boys—who will argue that the Hardys are hale and—well—hardy. Certainly, their adventures still fill the book stores (well over 100 titles to date), and new adventures arrive with dull precision. Admittedly, they solved crimes on TV screens as recently as the late 70s, enjoying a success denied such older, intellectual detectives as Nero Wolfe and Ellery Queen, such hard-boiled dicks as Philip Marlowe and Lew Archer. But one doesn't have to be a *tec* or a *dicx* to know the cold, hard truth: Frank and Joe Hardy died in 1959, done in by the daughter of Edward Stratemeyer, their creator.

It was in the closing year of that "fabulous" decade that Harriet Stratemeyer, owner and president of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, home to the Hardys, Nancy Drew, and the Bobbsey Twins, ordered every book in the Hardy Boys and Drew series revised to reflect then-current social attitudes and changes in the language. Gone were "speed demons" and "roadsters." Gone were "chums." Gone were such subversive activities as making

*Continued on page 101*





HE DROPPED LIGHTLY TO THE ROOF ON THE OLD MILL.  
*The Secret of the Old Mill* Frontispiece (Page 183)



"THESE BOYS WANT TO LOOK THROUGH THE OLD TOWER."  
*The Tower Treasure* Frontispiece (Page 149)

**The first three Hardy Boys books—*The Tower Treasure*, *The Secret of the Old Mill*, and *The House on the Cliff*—were ghost-written by Leslie McFarlane. The entire series was the inspiration of Edward Stratemeyer. PICTURED ABOVE: the original Walter S. Rogers frontispieces for *The Secret of the Old Mill* (LEFT) and *The Tower Treasure* (RIGHT).**

Frank, meanwhile, confronts Binks and accuses him of being Fred's secret boss, but Binks denies this, revealing himself to be an animal lover underneath that intimidating exterior. That leaves only one suspect.

Helping Mr. Bray house the recaptured animals at the zoo, Joe gets a close look at the bell worn by the billy goat. It bears the same inscription as Cousin Billy's sampler back at the farm house. While working at the zoo, however, Joe manages to accidentally release the lion from its cage.

(15) Frank confronts Eric as the mastermind behind the mystery of Ghost Farm. As he does, the lion appears behind them. Panicked by the lion, Eric confesses that he convinced Lacey to play dead, ostensibly so his animals would be cared for. But Eric really wanted control of the farm because he knew that something valuable was hidden there. Once the truth is out, Frank, who has been strangely calm in the lion's presence, tells him that the beast is really very tame and loves to be petted.

The secret of Ghost Farm is in Cousin Billy's Billy's bell, the clapper of which is the key to a safety deposit box that holds thousands of dollars in old Liberty Bonds. Lacey uses the money to build new pens for his animals—and, speaking of pens, Joe gets his purple one back.

THE MYSTERY OF GHOST FARM involves virtually no deduction, since everyone the kids meet voluntarily offers them reams of exposition. Any Mouseketeer who couldn't spot the guilty party should have had their ears revoked. Production values fell well below those of its predecessor, as evidenced by a sequence in which a row of cars parked along the unadorned exterior wall of a Disney sound stage is supposed to represent a city street.

Scots comedian Andy Clyde was a comedy star for Mack Sennett who later made a career of playing Western sidekicks. Still later, he turned to "Gramps"-type roles, such as Old Lacey. Paul Wexler, who plays the sinister Fred, contributed to another Disney classic, though you won't recognize him in it. The tall, lanky actor mimed the role of Horace, Cruella DeVil's henchman, in the live-action reference footage used by the animators for 101 DALMATIANS (1961).

THE MYSTERY OF GHOST FARM was the last of the Hardy Boys series, but not the last MICKEY MOUSE CLUB

*Continued on page 97*

*Michael Mallory is a Los Angeles based writer specializing in Golden Age Hollywood and animation. His work has appeared in Filmfax, Starlog, and Comic Scene.*

# MURDER BY RADIO

BY BILL PALMER

## The Adventures of Sam Spade

*Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear.*

These words will return many of us to earlier, and simpler, days. When, after dinner, the entire family would gather, huddled around the radio. When Dad would finish the paper and Mom her knitting, and the youngsters would sit on the floor with eyes and ears glued to the glowing bulb of that magical box. When sounds and words, not pictures, told thrilling stories and introduced us to a wealth of people and characters. When sometimes those characters were private eyes.

(The sound of a telephone ringing)

A female voice: "Sam Spade Detective Agency."

"It's me, Effie."



*The character of Sam Spade is best remembered (by those who neither read novels nor listened to classic radio shows) as the protagonist of John Huston's first directorial effort: 1941's THE MALTESE FALCON. Here, Spade (Humphrey Bogart), Joel Cairo (Peter Lorre), Brigid O'Shaughnessy (Mary Astor), and Caspar Gutman (Sydney Greenstreet) examine the dingus itself.*



*The usual suspect*

Set in San Francisco, THE ADVENTURES OF SAM

SPADE debuted on CBS on July 12, 1946, and ran until December 1949 with Howard Duff as the wise-cracking Sam and Lurene Tuttle as his secretary, Effie. Steve Dunne took over as Sam on November 17, 1950, and played him until the last show, broadcast on April 20, 1951. The director of the series was William Spier, the writers included Gil Doud and Bob Tallman, the announcer was Dick Joy, and the sponsor was Wildroot Cream-Oil (Charlie). The format of the half-hour show was always the same: Each episode began with Sam calling Effie with a final report for his client.

In one typical show, SAM & PSYCHE, aired on August 2, 1946, Sam is visited by Dr. Denoff, who is being blackmailed to the tune of \$10,000 by a certain Mr. Nikolitus. It seems that Nikolitus has a copy of the detailed case history of a very celebrated person and is threatening to divulge the material and ruin the lives of both the celebrity and Denoff.

Sam tells Denoff to have Nikolitus meet them at Denoff's office/residence for the payoff. When Sam arrives, however, he finds the Homicide squad already on the scene. Lt. Dundee tells him that the good doctor "did a Brophy out the window" of the 12th-floor penthouse apartment. Besides the servants, Mrs. Denoff, and Dr. Zoya (Denoff's best friend), the only person who had been in the house that day was the doctor's last patient, the famous actress Constance Brent.

After questioning Brent and her husband at the theatre, Sam returns to his office, where he finds the soft-spoken Nikolitus. The blackmailer denies any responsibility in Denoff's death and still wants the money. They agree to meet later at Sam's apartment, but when Sam gets home he finds Nikolitus dead. Before Sam can clear his name and solve the case, he ends up with Mrs. Denoff in the graveyard at night, digging up his client's body.

Thanks to a number of collectors, these old-time radio shows have been preserved and are available on tape; so we'll still be able to hear Lurene Tuttle's innocent voice...

"Good night, Sam."

"Good night, Sweetheart."





# JUST AN AVERAGE JOE (HARDY) AN INTERVIEW WITH TOMMY KIRK

by Richard Valley

Tommy Kirk was the average American boy for scores of filmgoers in the 50s and 60s. He was the boy next door. The boy who wasn't especially smart at school. The boy who wasn't particularly good at sports. No matter what he happened to be doing up there on the screen—whether it was transforming himself, via a magic ring, into a shaggy sheepdog; whether it was flying through the clear blue skies in a model T Ford; whether it was braving pirates and wild beasts on a lush, tropical isle; or simply going on a disastrous Paris vacation with his family—the young Disney star personified the quiet values and traditions of small-town America. No matter that his current address was Toyland, that he communicated with chimpanzees, that he claimed to be a Martian with the unlikely name of Go Go—the nation's youth saw themselves in Tommy Kirk. Teenage boys may have aspired to be Dean in *REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE*, Brando in *THE WILD ONE*, but what they came closest to being was Tommy Kirk. Tommy Kirk, without the flubber. And probably without the talent.

Tommy made his stage debut in a genuine piece of Americana—Eugene O'Neill's *AH, WILDERNESS!*—and his first TV appearance as one of the Hardy Boys on *THE MICKEY MOUSE CLUB*. The talented, though troubled, actor went on to garner critical raves as Travis Coates in 1957's *OLD YELLER*, and as Ernst Robinson in 1960's *SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON*. Major box-office success came with a string of Disney comedies—1959's *THE SHAGGY DOG*, 1961's *THE ABSENT-MINDED PROFESSOR*, and 1963's *SON OF FLUBBER*—but, within a few short years, as a result of drugs, alcohol, and the pain of having to keep his sexuality “under wraps,” Tommy and the Disney studio had parted company. Joining Disney alumnus Annette Funicello at AIP, Tommy starred in 1964's *PAJAMA PARTY* and 1966's *THE GHOST IN THE INVISIBLE BIKINI* before finding himself relegated to such bottom-of-the-barrel fare as *MARS NEEDS WOMEN* (1968). This is Tommy Kirk's story . . .

Photo © 1964 American International Pictures

*Scarlet Street:* We want to thank you for talking with us.

**Tommy Kirk:** No problem. You know, basically, this is the last interview I'm ever gonna give for the rest of my life.

*SS:* Why?

**TK:** Because I'm retired. I wanna be completely retired.

*SS:* Well, then, let's begin. What can you tell us about your early life?

**TK:** Well, I was born in Kentucky. I came west at the age of two with my family, during the Second World War. We were like a lot of people who came to California looking for work. My father heard of work in the aircraft industries out here; they were booming in wartime, and he ended up at Vultee in Downey. Then we moved to Fresno for a while, and then Bakersfield, and back to Downey. My mother was a stenographer and secretary, usually for legal firms, and we kids went to school in L.A. And that was my



family life—we were just sort of working-class people.

*SS:* Then you had no background in show business . . . ?

**TK:** No, nothing at all.

*SS:* How and when did you become an actor?

**TK:** Well, my older brother Joe, at the age of 16, when I was 12 in 1954, got interested in acting. That summer he was going around to auditions for plays, and he heard of an audition at Pasadena Playhouse, which is a pretty prestigious place for California. A lot of actors came from there—Don Ameche and Loretta Young and Gene Hackman; lots of people came from Pasadena Playhouse. They were doing a revival of Eugene O'Neill's *AH, WILDERNESS!*, which they had opened in 1934, starring Will Rogers. And in '54 they were opening it again—redoing it with Will Rogers, Jr., his son. So it was a big deal,



Future Disney star Tommy Kirk made his acting debut in the Pasadena Playhouse revival of *AH, WILDERNESS!*, starring Will Rogers, Jr. (Center) and former Disney star Bobby Driscoll (Seated Right).

and they were holding open auditions for some of the smaller roles. They had already cast the major roles; my brother didn't know that. He got this play and studied it and he went down to read for the part of Richard, which is the teenage lead. Bobby Driscoll had already been cast, but Joe didn't know that. And when he was studying the script he saw that they had a part for a young boy, Richard's brother Tommy, who's 10, and he asked me if I'd like to go along to the audition. I had nothing to do, so I said, "Sure." I met them; I remember meeting the director and his associate sitting at a table. They were friendly and asked a few questions. Then we got a call and they said, "Come back to another meeting," and I came back a second time. They told me the second time that I had the part. So that's what happened, and I did *AH, WILDERNESS!* that summer.

**SS:** Did you take to acting naturally?

**TK:** I thought it was sort of fun. For some reason, I had no stage fright. Maybe that's the thing; it was just something to do and it was fun. I liked being around all the show people. Bobby Driscoll was very nice to me. It's funny; he had just been fired from Disney.

**SS:** He'd been fired?

**TK:** Well, the year before he'd been arrested in Hollywood for possession of marijuana. He had just, the year before, done *PETER PAN*; he was the voice of Peter Pan—so they summarily dismissed him and he was out in the cold.

**SS:** He faded from sight very quickly...

**TK:** He made two or three terrible sort of "Z" monster movies—you know, "The

Thing on the Beach;" it was pitiful, really. They were like Roger Corman or worse. I mean, Roger Corman was Francis Ford Coppola compared to these productions. Terrible stuff and he couldn't get work and I guess everything went bad and he got very bitter, and he had a very tragic end to his life.

**SS:** But at the Pasadena Playhouse...

**TK:** Bobby was extremely nice. I was thrilled; I'd just seen *TREASURE ISLAND*, and I'd seen *SONG OF THE SOUTH* and some of these classic films. I couldn't believe I was working with him. He was very, very nice.

**SS:** Did your getting a role instead of your brother cause any sibling rivalry?

**TK:** Joe was disappointed. He wanted a career, but he gave it up later, and he's a dentist. He still performs in an amateur way; he performs with the San Jose Civic Light Opera. So he still has the performing bug. He has a very nice life.

**SS:** Did *AH, WILDERNESS!* result in further work?

**TK:** Yes, I got an agent from the play. An agent came backstage and introduced himself and gave me his card and said, "Would you have your folks call me?" My mom and dad did, and I ended up signed with a Beverly Hills agency. They sent me out on interviews and my mother or my father would drive me. I got work almost immediately; I got a little part on a TV show that December. I did a lot of series:

*GUNSMOKE* and *THE LORETTA YOUNG SHOW* and *THE MAN BEHIND THE BADGE*. I just never stopped working; I worked all the way through 1955 and 1956. I started with *MATINEE THEATRE*, these live, one-hour dramas coast to coast, and I was doing leads with two to three hundred lines.

**SS:** How many *MATINEE THEATRE* programs did you do?

**TK:** I did 35 of them.

**SS:** You did 35?

**TK:** And I worked with a lot of people, a lot of up-and-coming actors—people who are big stars now.

**SS:** Were you ever a part of any live, on-camera disasters?

**TK:** I had an incredible memory; I had like a photographic memory. I never had any problems, but I saw quite a few. Usually they were older people who'd forgot-

ten lines, and they just cut away. I never saw any great catastrophes.

**SS:** Did your series work lead to a contract with Disney?

**TK:** Yeah, that happened in the last half of 1956. I got this call to test for a series on *THE MICKEY MOUSE CLUB* called *THE ADVENTURES OF THE HARDY BOYS*, the two boy detectives. They sent me some pages, and I was to show up at the studio three or four days later and film the test. So I learned the lines and showed up, and there were a lot of other kids standing around. It was pretty raw; some of them were watching me as I did it. They had Tim Considine, who was already a Disney actor. I tested for Joe, his brother. A few days later my agent called and said, "You got it!" The money was very good; to me, it was a fortune! It took a long time; it was the longest job I'd ever had. I think it took about 16 weeks. They spent a lot of money and a lot of time on this series.

**SS:** *THE HARDY BOYS* was done as a multipart serial segment of *THE MICKEY MOUSE CLUB*. There were two Hardy Boys serials in all...

**TK:** The first one was called *THE MYSTERY OF THE APPLAGATE TREASURE* and the second was called *THE MYSTERY OF THE GHOST FARM*.

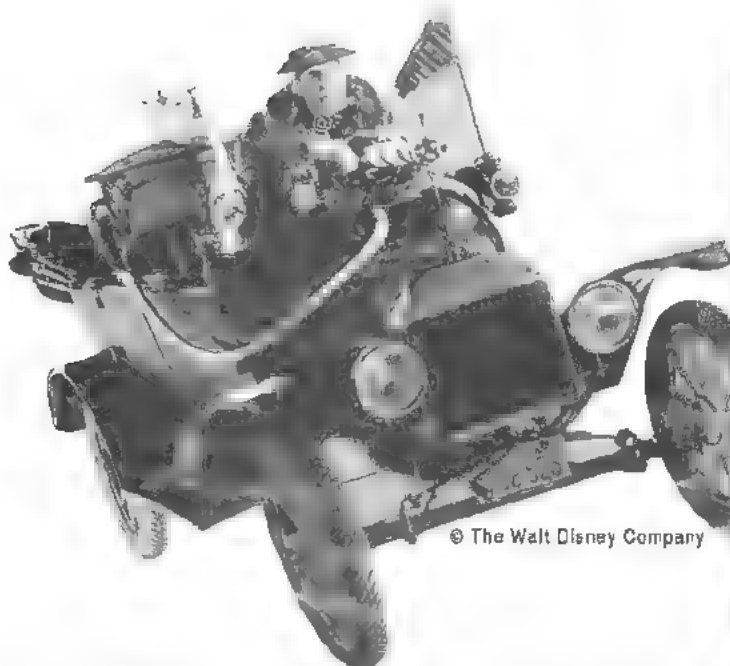
**SS:** Were they filmed back-to-back?

**TK:** No, *THE GHOST FARM* was done about two years later, and it was much



Following his critically acclaimed performance in *OLD YELLER* (1957), Tommy Kirk made a series of top-grossing Disney comedies. Here, he's about to become *THE SHAGGY DOG* (1959) while dancing with Roberta Shore.

© The Walt Disney Company



Tommy Kirk played dim-witted Biff Hawk in both 1961's *THE ABSENT-MINDED PROFESSOR*, starring Fred MacMurray as the prof with the flubberized flivver, and its 1963 sequel, *SON OF FLUBBER*. Here, thanks to flubber, Kirk and MacMurray have sent one of Biff's classmates (Leon Tyler) crashing through the roof of a chicken coop.



© The Walt Disney Company

inferior to the first one. It's a real mish mash; it's pretty terrible. Do you know who wrote *THE HARDY BOYS*? Jackson Gillis: That's how well written it was. Gillis wrote *COLUMBO*; he's one of the highest-paid, best writers in the business.

**SS:** Had you ever read any of the *Hardy Boys* books?

**TK:** I never had, and I never have read any of them. They told me they weren't going to do any more, and then suddenly, bang, they did another one! All I know is *GHOST FARM* was not based on a book; it was somebody's concoction and real cheap. It was just gobbledygook.

**SS:** Who directed *THE HARDY BOYS*?

**TK:** The original show was directed by Charles Haas, whom I've never heard of before or since. He was a very strict, very tough, no-nonsense director. That's what I remember: very stern and rough, really. The other was directed by Bud Springsteen, who I've never heard of before or since, and who was a real happy-go-lucky.

**SS:** And the serial directed by Haas turned out better?

**TK:** Yeah, much better. Much better script, better everything.

**SS:** How did you get along with costar Tim Considine?

**TK:** Well, we're two very different individuals. Tim's very athletic and salty and a little older than me. I just tried to get along with him. We didn't go places together; we didn't run in the same circles and everything, but we got along.

**SS:** Did you meet Walt Disney when you were signed to play Joe Hardy?

**TK:** Yeah. He came down on the set one day, just showed up and introduced himself. Very friendly.

**SS:** So you got on well?

**TK:** Well, you know, I just tried to be polite. Speak when spoken to and, other than that, shut up.

**SS:** Did you appear in any segments other than *THE HARDY BOYS* on *THE MICKEY MOUSE CLUB*?

**TK:** Yeah, I did a few odds and ends. I did the voice-over on a show from Denmark called *BOYS OF THE WESTERN SEA*. I did some things where Annette and I would introduce segments about some part of the world, how kids live in Finland—you know, things like that. One nice thing: I got to go to the Democratic and Republican conventions in 1956 as a reporter! I went to both conventions, in Chicago and San Francisco, and spent several days at each, on the floor and interviewing people. I interviewed the candidates; I saw Kennedy and Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson. It was great!

**SS:** And it was shown on...

**TK:** On *THE MOUSE CLUB*; yeah. The Mouseketeers' coverage of the convention. It was fantastic!

**SS:** Your first role in a Disney film was as Travis in *OLD YELLER*...

**TK:** After *THE HARDY BOYS*, Disney offered to put me under contract and, of course, I said yes. I had a seven-year contract. And then *OLD YELLER* came along, and that was the first feature film

I did for them. I'd done two other feature films before I came to Disney.

**SS:** What were they?

**TK:** *THE PEACEMAKER* with Sterling Hayden—I did a small part in 1955—and another movie called *DOWN LIBERTY ROAD*, with Angie Dickinson and Marshall Thompson. It was her first film.

**SS:** *OLD YELLER* is a fine film.

**TK:** Well, I feel pretty proud of that movie, 'cause the fans seem to remember that. It's very rare to see a Disney film with the killing of an animal. It's rather shocking. That was the twist in the thing; normally, in a Disney film, it's sort of sweetness and light.

**SS:** The scene in which you have to shoot your dog is a real heartbreaker. You play Travis very realistically and low-key.

**TK:** Well, I tried to. I really cried. You can't fake it; you've gotta cry. You can't just make a face.

**SS:** Having given a performance of that caliber, it's a shame that you weren't handed further dramatic opportunities.

**TK:** Well, I've always been annoyed by that, but it's water under the bridge. They had a man named Bill Walsh, the resident genius at the studio; they thought he had the Midas touch. He made *THE SHAGGY DOG*, which made a fortune, and so Bill Walsh became a big wheel at Disney. He made a whole series of comedies that made a lot of money: *THE ABSENT MINDED PROFESSOR*, *SON OF FLUBBER*. He was a great comedy writer, and that's all they could see me in, so that's all I got.

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**ABOVE:** Fired over a potential scandal, Tommy Kirk returned to the Disney lot to reprise his Merlin Jones role in *THE MONKEY'S UNCLE* (1965). Screen love-interest Annette Funicello appeared opposite the troubled star. **BELOW RIGHT:** A Disney publicity portrait from younger, if not necessarily happier, days.

**SS:** Disney finally made a sequel to *OLD YELLER*, called *SAVAGE SAM*...

**TK:** Which was much inferior.

**SS:** What can you tell us about your co-stars in *OLD YELLER*?

**TK:** Fess Parker, at that time, was on the outs with Disney—I presume over money. This was simply his last contractual obligation and he only worked about three days on this film, but good, competent, professional that he is, he came in and did it. I think he helps the movie a lot. I liked Fess Parker very much; he was very nice to me. I saw him about four years ago and we had a talk; he's a nice person.

**SS:** How about Dorothy McGuire?

**TK:** She's an extremely nice person, very gentle, mannered—a lady, you know, a very beautifully mannered and behaved person. Nobody can fault her.

**SS:** Kevin Corcoran played Arliss, your kid brother.

**TK:** We were very close; we did six or seven films back-to-back. I felt like he was my brother. We were very good friends.

**SS:** In *THE SHAGGY DOG*, you played Wilby Daniels, who has the strange habit of turning into a dog. It was an incredible hit for Disney...

**TK:** It was made for television as two one-hour TV shows, then at the last minute they decided to splice it together and release it as a feature. It was the box-office champion of 1959. It made millions. Fred MacMurray was a big part of it; he had a wonderful touch.

**SS:** What kind of relationship did you have with MacMurray?

**TK:** Not a very good relationship, really. Frankly, I found him a very cold person off the screen. There was just him and his pipe and his newspaper, and he said "Good morning," and that was about it. I never got close to him.

**SS:** No?

**TK:** No, he was a very cool customer.

**SS:** Another *SHAGGY DOG* costar was Annette Funicello. You'd worked with her on *THE MICKEY MOUSE CLUB*?

**TK:** Yeah, we'd done a few things. Introductions to various little segments of *THE MOUSE CLUB*...

**SS:** Did you get on well together?

**TK:** We got along. I was smart enough to realize that, if I'm gonna be under contract here and she's under contract here, it's very important that we get along well. So I always tried to behave nicely toward her, and she was nice toward me. Well, she's nice toward everybody; she's a perfect professional, just very nice to everybody.

**SS:** You were under contract. Did you do any outside work?

**TK:** About 1961 I had a hiatus and appeared

on a couple of TV series. I did a part on something called *THE AMERICANS*; it was about the Civil War, and it starred Darryl Hickman. I played a Union soldier on that. It was a short lived series.

**SS:** Filming Disney's *SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON* on location was reportedly a long and grueling experience...

**TK:** Very long and very grueling. We were in the tropics on an island with hurricanes and bugs—no poisonous snakes, but mosquitoes and everything. It was seven months filming, and we did a lot of climbing and going through swamps and being up to our necks in swamp water. I got a fever and was delirious, out of my head for about five days, ranting. I was bug-bit and, you know, they fester and get infected. I carried scars from that thing for years. It was an ordeal.

**SS:** Had it been planned that the shooting schedule would take that long?

**TK:** I think they planned it. They planned it, and they got a good film out of it.

**SS:** Was it a long shoot on your next film, *THE ABSENT-MINDED PROFESSOR*?

**TK:** Yes, it was long.

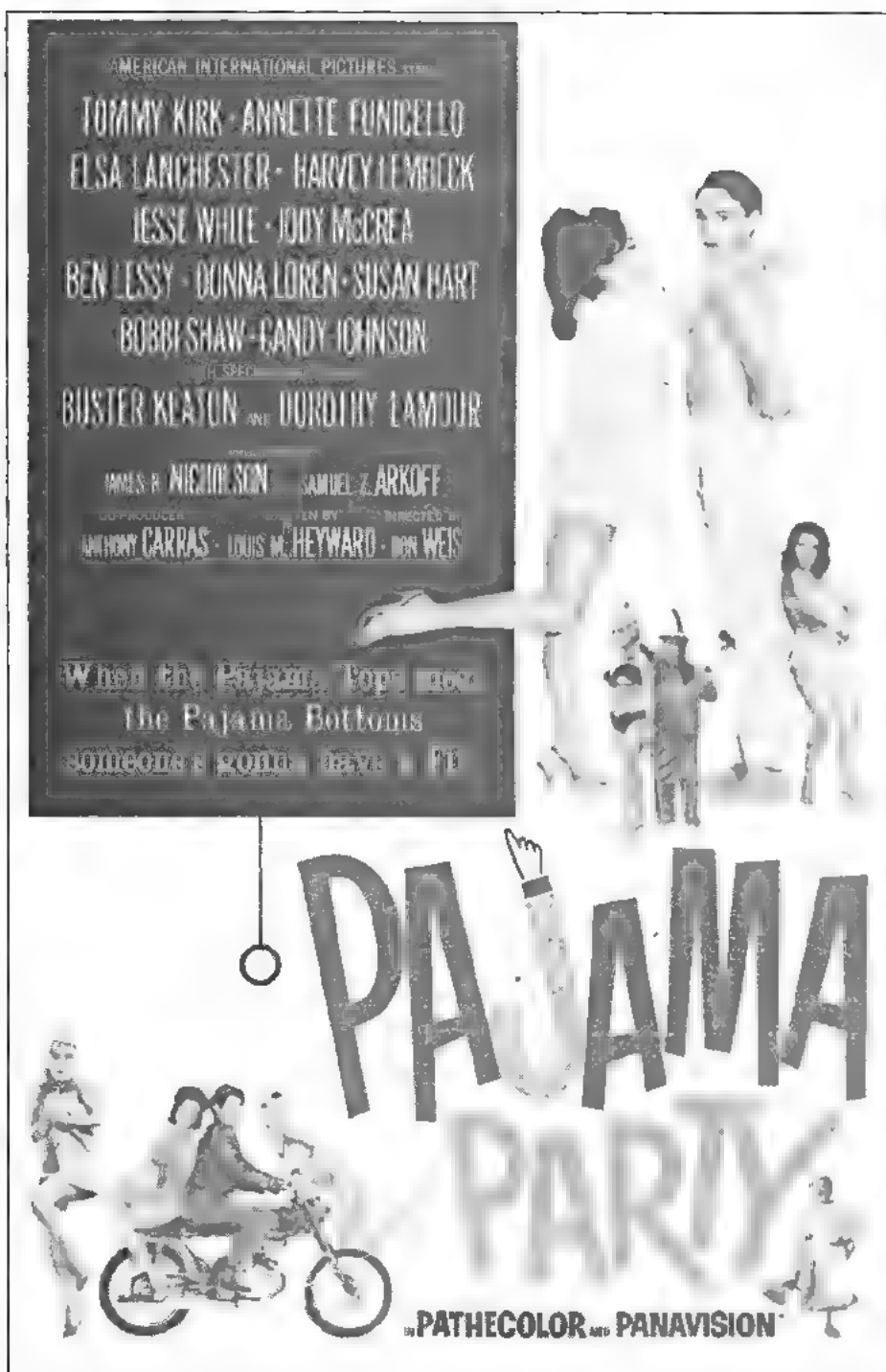
**SS:** Most of your scenes were played opposite Keenan Wynn...

**TK:** I very much liked him. He was a lot of fun, great sense of humor, always kidding around.

**SS:** You also worked with his father, Ed, in *BABES IN TOYLAND*...

**TK:** He was great. A very sweet man; everyone loved him. He was as crazy off-screen as on. He was like a kid, a cut-up, anything for a laugh. He was compulsive; that's just the way he was. He





**TOP RIGHT:** Tommy Kirk had a brief post-Disney career with AIP. In 1964's *PAJAMA PARTY*, he starred opposite film legends Dorothy Lamour and Elsa Lanchester. **CENTER RIGHT:** Eric Von Zipper (Harvey Lembeck) threatens *Go Go the Martian* (Kirk). **BOTTOM RIGHT:** As a sand-and-surf invader from outer space, Kirk made a big splash with Earth's beach bunnies.

was witty and fast with one liners—and he laughed himself; he enjoyed his own stuff as much as anybody else.  
**SS:** *BABES IN TOYLAND* seems to split in half storywise, with the second half set at the Toymaker's.

**TK:** The whole movie is, to me, lopsided. It's not a good film; it doesn't quite come off. It has cute stuff in it, but a

lot of it's a mess. Ed Wynn came up to me at the studio one day, and he said, "Tommy, listen, have you seen *BABES IN TOYLAND*?" And I said, "Yean." He said, "Tommy, I hear it isn't very good." I felt very sad, you know, but embarrassed. I didn't want to say, "I don't think it is either, Ed." But he said that: "I hear it isn't very good."



**SS:** Was it difficult for you, being gay and working for such a conservative company as Disney?

**TK:** Oh, it was terrible. It was terrible.

**SS:** Did you have to keep your personal life completely closeted?

**TK:** Of course.

**SS:** Were they aware at the studio...

**TK:** They were growing aware. They weren't stupid; they could add two and two, and I think they were beginning to suspect. I noticed people in certain quarters were getting less and less friendly. You know, you can tell. To complicate the thing, I was messing around with drugs and drinking. I wasn't disciplined; I was kind of a wild Irish person and nobody could tell me what to do. I lived my life exactly as I pleased; I tried to keep my private life private,



One of Tommy Kirk's favorite costars was Mr. Sherlock Holmes himself, Basil Rathbone, whose disdain for horror movies didn't prevent him from being a delightful companion on the set of *THE GHOST IN THE INVISIBLE BIKINI* (1966).

but I was messing around and I was drinking a lot and going around to wild parties and carrying on, you know—and this is all contrary to the Disney image.

**SS:** *BON VOYAGE* was, for you, an especially troublesome production.

**TK:** Yeah, some things happened, and we all got sick in France. Everybody got this awful dysentery; everybody was sick as dogs for a couple of weeks. And we still had to shoot; I remember that Frankly, I couldn't stand James Neilson, the director; I thought he was a real jerk. He had all the tact of a toilet seat; I just couldn't stand him. I couldn't stand Jane Wyman; she couldn't stand me...

**SS:** Oh, really?

**TK:** Yes, really. I thought she was a bitch; she was a mean, mean bitch. I never did anything to her and she went out of her way to be extremely nasty to me. And on this film I had my only real blow-up with Fred MacMurray.

**SS:** What happened?

**TK:** There was an actor on the movie, named Elliot Reid, who was always doing Groucho Marx impressions, and I said a Groucho line, kidding Fred: "Oh, no, you've got the close-up and I get the back of my head." And he took it wrong and he turned around and turned red in the face, and he just shook from head to toe, and he put his finger in my face and gave me the worst bawling out I've ever had in my life. You know, whoa!

**SS:** Because of a joke?

**TK:** Yeah! And, hey, I thought, "I'll die before I ever speak to you again!"

**SS:** But later, in 1963, you made *SON OF FLUBBER* together

**TK:** And when he walked on the set, he said, "Hello, Tom." I said, "Hi, Fred." And so we were civil, but that was it. I don't know; I thought he was sort of a jerk in a lot of ways.

**SS:** When did you start drinking?

**TK:** I was drinking from the time I was 14. I always liked it. I started messing with drugs in the last couple of years at Disney—around '62. I'd get so tired, and somebody gave me some amphetamines, and they made me feel good and gave me energy, and I got addicted. There were a lot of people mixing them with alcohol. I very nearly died of an overdose a couple of times in

1966. I got off drugs absolutely by 1968, but I continued to drink. During that part of the 60s, I was pretty messed up and I wasn't employable; I wasn't fit for work. I wouldn't go for treatment and nobody could tell me what to do; I just wrecked everything in my life. Thank God I didn't do anything that I look back on with horror. I never hurt anybody; I never committed any crimes. I didn't kill anybody in a car accident or kill myself, though I very nearly did, drinking and driving. I had a couple of accidents; it's miraculous that I survived. I fell asleep at the wheel on the Ventura Freeway one night about 1967, and drove diagonally across the Freeway. Just missed getting creamed by a truck, and at 60 miles an hour drove into a bank of ivy up the side of the Freeway. In a convertible, yet. It was drugs and alcohol, you know?

**SS:** Yes.

**TK:** I never messed with heroin; it was mainly pills. Speed, uppers, diet pills—and I got thin as a rake, and I was high all the time. It was a terrible period in my life. So I can understand the studio letting me go. They dropped me in '63; they didn't renew my option. They let me come back and do the last Merlin Jones film, *THE MONKEY'S UNCLE*.

**SS:** In 1965, *The drinking and drug abuse* doesn't show up in your performance.

**TK:** To me, it's very obvious. On both of the Merlin Jones things, I was very high on pills. One time I blacked out and fainted doing a scene. I was still hung over from the night before; I was doing a scene and I had to do some kind of a take where I held my breath, and I simply blacked out and fell to the floor.

**SS:** Was there a specific incident that brought about the break with Disney?

**TK:** Yeah, I picked somebody up. It was just one of these crazy things; I used to swim in the pool in downtown Burbank,

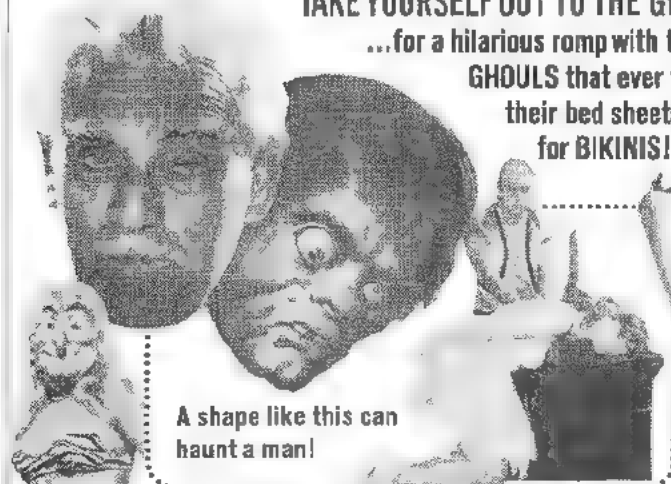
In 1966, Tommy Kirk shared *GHOST IN THE INVISIBLE BIKINI* bed- and screen-time with costar Aron Kincaid (presently the gravelly voice of Killer Croc on television's *BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES*).



Photo courtesy of Aron Kincaid

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# AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL'S GHOST IN THE INVISIBLE BIKINI

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CAST BY DON WEIS STYLING BY LOUIS M. HEYWARD COSTUME DESIGNER EDWARD J. LILMAN EDITOR LOUIS M. HEYWARD



and I met this teenager and one thing led to another and we had an affair. And then he talked, and his parents went down to the studio and Disney was confronted with this. They didn't press charges, but that was the end of my contract. They did not renew me. So all I can say is . . . if people want to make something dirty and nasty out of it, I don't care. I've never done anything that I didn't feel in my heart was love. It's been a very pure and innocent thing to me all my life. It's my true nature, and if people want to make something ugly or salacious over it I have ceased for many, many, many years to give a shit. And you may quote me.

**SS:** Was it difficult for you to find work after that?

**TK:** Oh, it was terrible. From 1964 to 1974, it was pretty much of a nightmare. I was still drinking heavily; I didn't really get off drugs—really—till the end of the 60s. I was still fooling around with marijuana and everything, and I was never quite in my right mind. I was basically unemployable and very thin. I don't know; just nothing worked. People tried to help me, but I lost everything I had. I lost my money, my property; I partied it all away. I was very irresponsible financially. I lived my own life; I guess I was just seeking love or pleasure or some kind of illusory or transitory happiness, and I was pretty wild. The first 10 years after leaving Disney were pretty awful. I made a series of "B" movies. Two or three of them I'm not too ashamed of—the two I made for AIP.

**SS:** PAJAMA PARTY?

**TK:** And THE GHOST IN THE INVISIBLE BIKINI, with Basil Rathbone. They're sort of cute; they both hold up pretty well.

**SS:** You also appeared in VILLAGE OF THE GIANTS . . .

**TK:** Yeah, that's not so bad. It holds up; it's entertaining, anyway. It has a good score by Jack Nitzsche, and Beau Bridges is in it. It made lots of money. It was for Bert Gordon, and that's one of the ones I'm not too ashamed of. Johnny Crawford is in it, Ronny Howard is in it, and it was, I think, a good production. But I made some others that were drek; they were the kind of thing that Bobby Driscoll did at the end of his career. At one point I made two movies for this person in Dallas—these horrible monster movies, and they were just shit.

**SS:** This was Larry Buchanan?

**TK:** Yeah. I needed the money. I was broke. Then I did some things for producers who were not mainstream. I remember doing an experimental film in San Francisco, sitting in a room with a lot of people having an encounter session with this therapist. It was horrible; it was an all-night thing and everybody would scream and yell and weep and throw themselves on the floor. And they had this professional bully-boy who would yell, "So what's the real truth? What's the real truth? Don't give me that bullshit." No matter what you'd say he wouldn't believe it. And I said, "What am I going through this for?" Well, I went through it for a thousand dollars, and it was horrible! It was horrible! It was a session in cruelty,

like something in the lunatic asylum in THE PERSECUTION AND ASSASSINATION OF MARAT! I went through a lot of things, and some films that were so stinko, for some no-talent people, that by 1974 everything had gone so bad and so rotten that I was sick of the business, and I guess the business was sick of me, and I quit.

**SS:** Just quit cold.

**TK:** I started looking around for employment, and I started my own business, my own carpet and upholstery cleaning business, and slowly I began to go back to work and build a life for myself. And I've supported myself rather well.

**SS:** The films you dislike most are MARS NEEDS WOMEN and IT'S ALIVE, which were made for AIP by Larry Buchanan. He'd never directed before?

**TK:** I don't know. I know he's made some since; he's even made one that wasn't too bad. He made one called PRETTY BOY FLOYD, with Fabian Forte.

**SS:** So he got better as he went along.

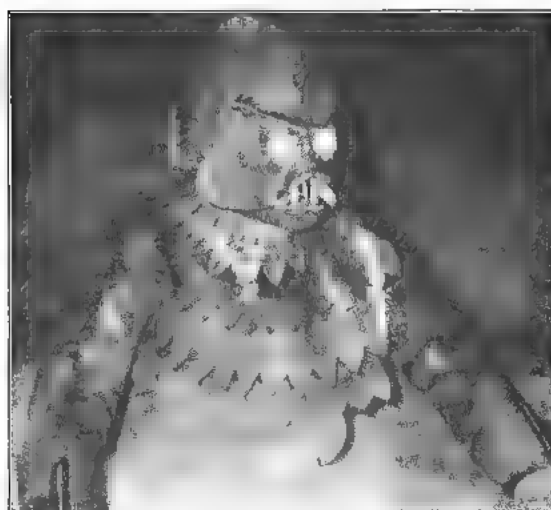
**TK:** But then, again, I saw something else that he made recently and I couldn't believe it. He filmed a story about the Loch Ness Monster and he obviously filmed it at Loch Ness. They had local people and some good actors, good character actors, and a lot of atmosphere, and I thought that was all good. Well, finally they had to encounter the monster, and the thing that Larry had, it looked like an inflatable bathroom toy! Absolutely ludicrous! Ridiculous! It looked like a rubber toy, and I thought, "He never learns."

**SS:** What was your own experience acting for Buchanan?





Ronald V. Boast Hollywood Movie Poster

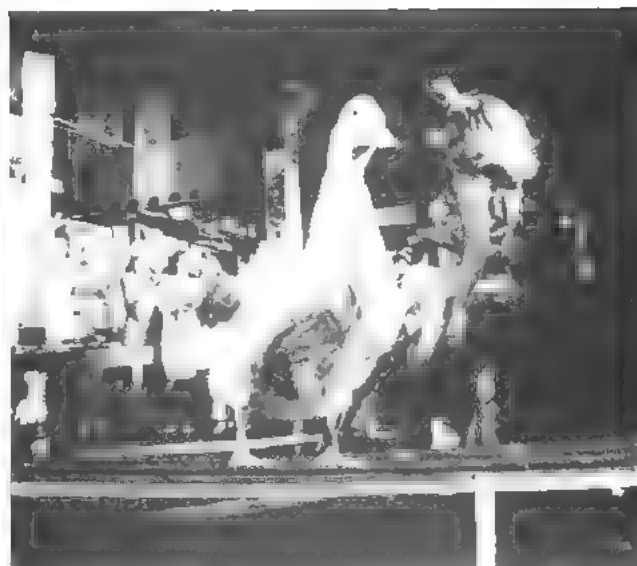


Ronald V. Boast Hollywood Movie Poster

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Tommy Kirk and Deborah Walley in American International's *THE GHOST IN THE INVISIBLE BIKINI* (1966); silent-screen legend Buster Keaton, former Mouseketeer and peanut butter salesperson Annette Funicello, and Tommy in *PAJAMA PARTY* (1964); Larry Buchanan's *MARS NEEDS WOMEN* (1968); Buchanan's *IT'S ALIVE!* (1968); and *TRACK OF THUNDER* (1968), one of Tommy Kirk's last films.



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**LEFT:** Ronny Howard (before he became director Ron) played the boy genius responsible for creating the *VILLAGE OF THE GIANTS* (1965). Here, Ronny and Tommy Kirk eye the growth-inducing milkshake. **RIGHT:** Everybody duck!

**TK:** I worked very hard on *IT'S ALIVE*, trying to be believable about being pursued by some kind of monster, and it turned out the bastard wouldn't spend a nickel on special effects. Instead, he got the guy who was the stand-in—the all-purpose stand-in—to put on a scuba suit with cut-out ping-pong balls for eyes, and that was the monster!

**SS:** That's incredible!

**TK:** It fills me with rage, really. It fills me with anger, 'cause it's so disgusting to make a film that cheap and shoddy. I feel very great anger that I even consented to be in it; it was just disgusting!

**SS:** You wore the scuba suit, too...

**TK:** Right. In *MARS NEEDS WOMEN*. You know, that was a period of my life when I was completely at loose ends. I was out of money, and I did anything anybody offered me. All big mistakes. You can't do that. You must be selective.

**SS:** Let's talk briefly about a few more of your costars

**TK:** There were people I liked, people I didn't like...

**SS:** Let's mention a few names. In *PAJAMA PARTY*, there were several old pros, including Buster Keaton...

**TK:** Well, I remember feeling embarrassed because this great, great star was running around in an Indian suit doing low-comedy schtick in this schlock "B" film. And he looked quite ill. I think he had lung cancer at the time. He looked like hell, and here he was in this Indian suit, running around in this stupid film. I mean, this was a person who was a legend. He should have been at home; he needed to retire. He was an old, old man.

**SS:** Dorothy Lamour was in that film, too.

**TK:** I never had any scenes with her. I saw her on the set. She was very gracious, very professional. I don't think I knew her except to say good morning.

**SS:** What about Elsa Lanchester?

**TK:** She was a bitch to me. I don't know; I guess I rubbed her the wrong way and she rubbed me the wrong way. I don't know why it happened. Elliot Reid used to say it was chemistry.

**SS:** That's Elliot Reid, the actor who appeared as Shelby Carpenter in both *THE ABSENT-MINDED PROFESSOR* and *SON OF FLUBBER*...

**TK:** We got to be pretty good friends. He was always doing Groucho. He was very funny; he was a good mimic.

**SS:** Your costars in *GHOST IN THE INVISIBLE BIKINI* included Basil Rathbone and Boris Karloff.

**TK:** Basil Rathbone I loved! He was a very much-loved person, one of the most gracious and genuinely friendly men. Always interested in other people. He was very dearly loved by everyone who ever worked with him. He was one of the nicest people in the world, contrary to the ghastly, God-awful, icy villain that he played so well on the screen. I think he was one of the great figures in films and one of the great screen villains. That was one of the greatest joys of my life, making that film, because we nit it off and we talked a lot. We talked about philosophy, talked about writers and literature and art. He shared himself, and I was fascinated by him, 'cause I'd seen all his great classics and I asked him about them all and what it was like to make them. I loved him. Wonderful person!

**SS:** And Karloff?

**TK:** I only met him once, and he was very warm and friendly. Big smile and a warm handshake and "How are you?"

**SS:** He was badly crippled by then...

**TK:** He seemed quite frail.

**SS:** You worked with John Carradine on *BLOOD OF GHASTLY HORROR*.

**TK:** I never met him.

**SS:** You never met him?

**TK:** No. I only worked one or two days on that, and the only person I worked with was Kent Taylor.

**SS:** It's often thought that anyone who quits show business is a failure, when in fact they've simply built entirely new lives for themselves.

**TK:** I have. I've quit drugs. I don't use anything at all. I don't smoke; I don't drink; I don't use drugs. I eat a very healthy diet, and I feel pretty good. I enjoy my work and I am a Christian. I've found Christianity to be a huge and tremendous help in getting the poison out of my system, purging myself of resentments and bitterness—'cause I've seen so many kid actors whose careers have gone on the rocks like mine; they're so eaten up with resentments about the past that they're poisoned by it. It completely cripples them. And I don't feel any of that anymore.

**SS:** They appear on talk shows...

**TK:** I know. I want nothing to do with it. I won't have anything to do with it; it sickens me. People who can't forgive and forget and go on with their lives, people who hold grudges—I'm sick of them. They make the world a terrible place to live in. I won't live on hate because it's a cycle of violence; it's a descent into a maelstrom, and I won't live like that. I don't blame Disney for firing me. I was on drugs, and I was fooling around in ways totally incompatible with a family-oriented studio. I've accepted it. I've accepted the fact that my career was ruined by my behavior and no one and nothing else. I've accepted it. I've forgiven myself. Maybe some people gave me some hard knocks along the way, but I've forgiven them. I don't hold hate; I feel very cleansed of

*Continued on page 97*

# STILL FRANK AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

## AN INTERVIEW WITH TIM CONSIDINE

by Michael Mallory

No need to ask whatever happened to Tim Considine. It's been years since the former Disney star ("Near Mouseketeer," in his words) made acting his main thrust, but Considine has hardly been idle, or, for that matter, out of the public eye. He has written and directed for television (MY THREE SONS, TARZAN), authored two books (*The Photographic Dictionary of Soccer* and *The Language of Sport*), and has two more books in the works. In addition, he is a race-car driver, photographer, and writer who has published dozens of articles, and a sought-after public speaker. He is also involved in the development of alternative-energy vehicles.

Most of his writing and lecturing these days reflects his first loves—cars and racing—but he has subbed for William Safire for *The New York Times Magazine's* "On Language" column.

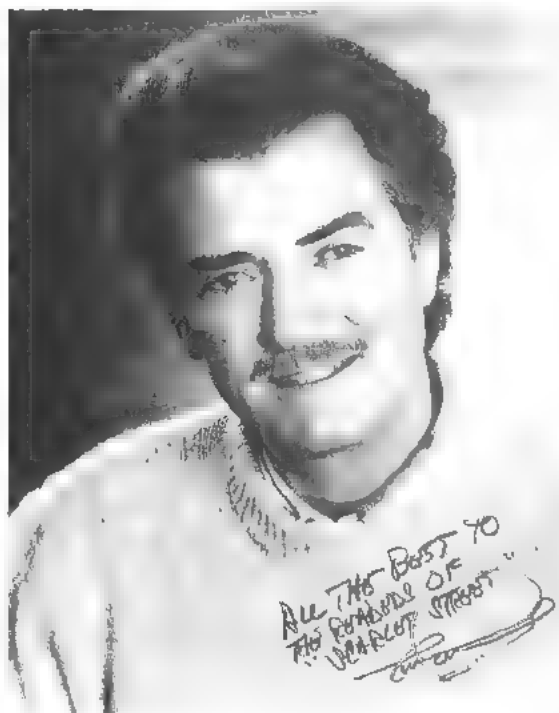
Born December 31, 1940, Tim Considine entered show biz at the tender age of 11, starring opposite Red Skelton in MGM's *THE CLOWN* (1953), a remake of the 1932 Wallace Beery/Jackie Cooper weepie *THE CHAMP*. It was an auspicious debut and a performance Leonard Maltin has called "so good he overcomes some of the hokiness of the script."

Tim signed with Disney in 1955. Not really a Mouseketeer, he appeared in *THE MICKEY MOUSE CLUB's* daily serials, starring opposite David Stollery in three Spin and Marty series, and solving mysteries with Tommy Kirk in two featuring the Hardy Boys. His sole feature for Disney was *THE SHAGGY DOG* (1959) with Fred MacMurray, who shortly would number Tim as one of MY THREE SONS. Tim's last acting job to date, on *SIMON AND SIMON*, was done primarily as a lark.

Yesterday's Hardy Boy is now a husband and father, soccer coach to his son's team, and dedicated non-smoker who works out of his book-filled canyon home on the outskirts of Los Angeles, or wherever he can take his trusty laptop computer/modem/fax. In the wake of the never-ending stream of reports about child stars who have crashed and burned, Tim Considine remains a happy survivor.

*Scarlet Street: You began at the top: a big role in a big picture at a big studio opposite a big star. How did that come about?*

**Tim Considine:** My parents were involved in the business, so they didn't want me to be a kid actor. But friends brought it up in front of me and my parents, and I said, "Oh, I'd love to do that!" They rolled their eyes and said, "Well, you can go on an interview." They took me to this wonderful guy I used to call Uncle Sam—Sam Armstrong, my first agent. Sam had written one of the movies that my dad produced, a really good movie called *SEQUOIA*, which predated all the Disney stuff with people and animals. It was about a mountain lion and a deer growing together. Sam said they were going to make this thing at Metro, where my dad [John Considine] had been for many years. Well, it was a huge part, and there was no way I was going to get it, so



my parents said, "Sure, why not?" We went out there and I saw Red Skelton, and I just kept coming back and coming back, and the field got narrower and narrower, and finally it was between me and a dark-haired kid. I was a real towhead, and I guess they liked that better. Dore Scharly made the decision; my father had brought Dore Scharly to the studio, so it was some kind of symmetry.

**SS: Did you like Red Skelton?**

**TC:** I loved working with Skelton, and he made me love him like a father, so it became real to me. He said to me—it was the first time I'd ever heard it, and I've heard it a zillion times since—"Did you ever hear about the guy who didn't know shit from Shinola?" I was ... what, 11 years old, or something like that, and I thought that was so funny. But he said it for a purpose; it was to relax me and it was done just between us. I thought he was



Teen stars Tim Considine and Tommy Kirk share a curb with a canine friend in Walt Disney's smash hit *THE SHAGGY DOG* (1959). Kirk and the pooch both played the title role. Considine (understandably) played puzzlement.

the funniest man alive. He was just a wonderful guy.

**SS:** What was your first television project for Disney?

**TC:** SPIN AND MARTY was the first thing I did there.

**SS:** That was in 1955. Did you have much contact with the Mouseketeers?

**TC:** I did later. They ended up working in our shows. I don't think any of them were in *THE HARDY BOYS*, but they were in the SPIN AND MARTYs. See, I never knew SPIN AND MARTY was a part of anything else. As far as I was concerned, it was just another story that I was in, and it was fun. I learned how to ride a horse, how to rope cattle and do tricks with the rope. Then this monster was created with all kinds of celebrity, and it surprised the hell out of us. I wrote about that in a piece about David Stollery, who I am reunited with now as a writer and car person. He's a car designer, something he always wanted to be, and he's a damn good one.

**SS:** You and David must have had some great car conversations on the set.

**TC:** Oh, yeah. His was always about designing, and mine was about driving.

**SS:** What about the Mouseketeers?

**TC:** I thought they were really talented and had a lot of guts to do what they did. The first time I saw the Mouseketeers, I thought, "Who are these kids in the yarmulkes with wings?" I was horrified when I saw what they did, thinking, "Oh God, I could never do that! Get up and sing and dance . . ." I could never have done that at that stage in my life. It's one thing to get up on a horse and ride around and say words, and try to make it real, but to get up and dance and do funny stuff and sing . . . whoa! (Laughs)

**SS:** Tommy Kirk was your costar in *THE HARDY BOYS* and later in *THE SHAGGY DOG*. How did you get along?

**TC:** Great, great. We still do. I don't see him a great deal, but I always had the greatest respect for him as an actor. I was older than Tommy and gave him a bad time, the way a kid gives a younger brother a bad time. But he was my brother, my friend, and nobody else could say anything about him. I always

thought he was a monster talent. I'm sorry he stopped acting; it's a great loss.

**SS:** How would you give him a bad time?

**TC:** I used to give him a lot of shit about how I was the only one who didn't wear a Mouseketeer uniform—I mean, when we did those big portraits of all the Disney kids with Walt, I could wear a SPIN AND MARTY cowboy hat, you know, with the Triple-R insignia, and a shirt. And poor Tommy was in nothing like that, so he was always stuck with Mouseketeer cars. I used to kid him about that.

**SS:** Have you seen any of *THE HARDY BOYS* shows since you made them?

**TC:** They're awful! They made them in about 15 minutes. They were made in their time and, boy, do they look like it!

**SS:** But you and Tommy come across quite well in them.

**TC:** I didn't think I was very good in it. I thought Tommy was terrific in it, but I was just this little kid. I was sort of natural. That was it.

**SS:** Were you not serious about acting?

**TC:** No, I liked it; I had a good time. I didn't know a great deal about it. If I





**LEFT:** Tim Considine's first acting experience came playing the Jackie Cooper role in a 1953 remake of 1931's *THE CHAMP*, retitled *THE CLOWN* and starring Red Skelton in the part originally played by Wallace Beery. **RIGHT:** *The President is under attack!* Considine was one of several kids rough-housing with Roosevelt (Ralph Bellamy) in 1960's *SUNRISE AT CAMPOBELLO*. **NEXT PAGE:** Skelton, Considine, and Jane Greer in *THE CLOWN* (1953).

was at all gifted—and I don't think I was; I was more lucky than anything—it's that I could be natural. And there's a good side to that and a bad side. The good side is that you're never really terrible; the bad side is that you're limited to being who you are, or at least the parts of your personality that you want to show. That's pretty much what I was in that period of time, whereas Tommy was an actor, a performer.

**SS:** What did you think of the Hardy Boys serials while you were making them?

**TC:** I didn't look at them when I did them. Once in a while I did, but I was much more involved with making them than watching them, because making them was something we did every day.

**SS:** Which serial do you prefer?

**TC:** Well, having seen all of the first one, I hope I like the second one. I don't know; I don't remember all that much about it. I do remember Arthur Shields in *THE APPLGATE TREASURE*. He was wonderful; I was really in awe of him.

**SS:** You knew who he was before working with him?

**TC:** Sure I did. I'm Irish!

**SS:** How about the rest of your Disney work: any preferences?

**TC:** I liked *SPIN AND MARTY* the best. I got to be with horses and it was just more fun. The setting was more fun, and you were with a bunch of guys, so there was more play. *THE HARDY BOYS* was shot at Disney studios; we didn't shoot *SPIN AND MARTY* at Disney till later. We shot it on location; it was a work environment, but not a work environment where you went to the office or stage.

**SS:** There's a scene in the second Hardy Boys serial, *THE MYSTERY OF GHOST*

*FARM, with you and a lion. Did you actually work on the set with the lion?*

**TC:** Now that you remind me, I do remember a lion, yeah. You know, at Universal one time—this was one of the last things I ever did, as a hoot—this friend of mine, John Stephens, was producing one of the last *SIMON AND SIMONS*, and he had the other guys from *MY THREE SONS* on the show, and he said, "C'mon, do this cameo." So I was on the set and I had to go to the bathroom. I ran out the stage door and asked where it was, and they said, "Well, you go down this street, and that street . . ." And I went running and made the turn and went down this little alleyway and made another turn, and goddammit . . . there was a lion standing right there, big as a house, about four feet from me! Holy Shit! They had just taken it out of the cage, and I went whoooooaa!

**SS:** Did you make it to the bathroom in time?

**TC:** There was no need after that! Wardrobe! (Laughs) John Stephens, incidentally, was a casting director many, many years ago; he used to employ Tommy Kirk and me in some of his TV shows. He used to point out that Tommy was such an actor that, if you said, "Cry," God, tears would be coming out of his eyes 20 seconds later. He was a fearless actor.

**SS:** In his *Scarlet Street* interview, Tommy Kirk said that he began developing a drinking problem at age 14, right before he did *THE HARDY BOYS*. Did you know that at the time?

**TC:** I was never aware of any of that.

**SS:** The drinking, in part, was in reaction to having to hide his homosexuality, which he is quite open about.

**TC:** He is now. I was never aware of it then, and I'm glad that he's come

out, for personal reasons. I've been asked by strangers, "Is Tommy Kirk gay?" and that always pissed me off. My answer was rude and direct: "I don't know; I never fucked him." And that was the end of that conversation! I always resented the question, because it's not my business. So I was personally relieved that I would never have to say that again.

**SS:** Tommy also characterized himself as "the problem child of the studio."

**TC:** I'm sure in some ways he was, if all that was going on. But he certainly wasn't the only one. I mean, God bless him, Bobby Driscoll had some problems, too. I always thought I was the biggest pain in the ass, and I'm sure I was, but we all are to ourselves. We only live in our own shoes and so we only know about our own problems.

**SS:** Getting through adolescence is hard enough without doing it in public. It must be difficult when you have to pretend you're a perfect kid for the cameras and press.

**TC:** Well, I'll tell you, I don't want my son to do it, because there's no reality in it. There's a lot of bullshit that goes on and praise that comes too easily and power that comes too easily and attention that comes too often. Those things are hard enough to deal with as an adult. It's a very intense trip, and like any kind of celebrity fame it comes and goes—zip zip. If it all disappears and there is no life after the stage, that's pretty sad. Fortunately, I had other interests. I was interested in race cars and women and having a good time with my friends. I was just lucky—stupid, I guess—and I had great parents who allowed me to do it as long as I had my feet on the ground.

SS: Your feet stayed pretty close to earth?  
TC: I don't know if I had my feet on the ground always, but I knew about having my feet on the ground; if I didn't, I knew I didn't. That saved me.

SS: One last quote from Tommy Kirk: In his interview, he described the teenage Tim Considine as "athletic and salty."

TC: Athletic and salty? Probably that older-brother thing. I picked on him a little, not bad, but funny. I'm sure my sense of humor was like an older brother's.

SS: How was your relationship with Walt Disney himself?

TC: Fine.

SS: Was he "Uncle Walt" or was it strictly a boss/employee relationship?

TC: Oh, there was never anything like that. I was always in awe of him. There was never any, "I'm the boss," never that feeling. He was neat. My biggest memory of him was... I'd heard that Red Skelton's child, I'm not sure now whether it was a daughter or a son, had...

SS: Skelton's son had leukemia.

TC: It was his son. Did he die?

SS: Yes, in the late 1950s, and Skelton apparently was devastated.

TC: I never followed up on this, but I remember asking Mr. Disney if he could make a special trip to Disneyland, and told him the story. He was on his way to lunch, and I caught up with him and sought out a conversation. I told him real quick about what I'd

heard. I didn't know how old Skelton's son was, but it seemed to me that he was of an age where it might be a really neat thing if he could go to Disneyland on a special trip with

Walt—whom I never called Walt, mind you; it was Mr. Disney.

SS: Did he take you up on the suggestion?

TC: I don't know. I'd love to know, to tell you the truth. It would be neat if he did.

[NOTE: Further research has shed no light on the matter, but Disney may have; he often escorted celebrities and their families to Disneyland. Nine-year-old Richard Skelton died of leukemia in 1958.]

SS: Did Walt ever come onto the set while you were filming?

TC: Sometimes. Not much on SPIN AND MARTY, because that was all location, but he came a lot on THE SHAGGY DOG. That was with Tom.

SS: And Annette Funicello. What was she like off screen?

TC: Very sweet and unaffected. She wasn't a Professional Young Actress type. Again, as in my case, credit her parents. When I first met her, she wasn't nearly as beautiful as she became later, but she was attractive. She always had this attractive demeanor.

SS: There are lots of studio photos of you and Annette together, arms linked, that sort of thing. Anything between you two?

TC: Well, I was a couple years older than she was. When you're 15, you don't want a 13-year-old girl. (Laughs) No, we were always paired because we were among the more prominent Mice.

SS: So outside of publicity, the studio didn't try to get you together?

TC: The studio didn't try to get anyone together! (Laughs)

SS: Did the studio actively discourage you from doing anything, or place any demands on your personal life?

TC: Nothing that wasn't imposed by my own family or my own values at the time. At the time, had I known some of the things Tom was into, I probably would have been aghast. I don't know; I would imagine I was kind of a tight-ass, white-bread WASP. No, WASC: White Anglo Saxon Catholic.

SS: Are you pleased with your performance in THE SHAGGY DOG?

TC: No. I've always thought that was one of the worst performances I ever gave. Whenever I see it, I go, "Oh, God!" That was phoned in, that one was. It was a very critical time as a teenager and I was more interested in being a cool guy than I was in being an actor, and it shows! (Laughs) The dog almost blinded me once.

SS: The real dog?

TC: Yeah. We were doing a thing on the back lot where he comes out of the water and he's the dog, and he's turning back into Tommy, right? And I'm wrestling the dog, who was a sweetheart of a dog; he didn't have an aggressive bone in his body. We planned it so that they'd throw him on me and I would grab him by the fur on his back and roll him back and forth, so that he would be off balance. Then they'd lay in the "Grrrr-arr-arr" and it would look like he was attacking me. Well, it worked



***"... had I known some of the things Tom was into, I probably would have been aghast. I was kind of a tight-ass, white-bread WASP. No, WASC: White Anglo Saxon Catholic."***

great until he stepped in my eye with sand on his paw. They took me to St. Joseph's Hospital, but first I had to get the makeup off. I took a shower; I had a teaspoon of sand in one eye and I closed my other eye. When I opened my good eye, I went, "Oh, my God, I can't see anything!" The guy who was my babysitter that day said, "Open your other eye." I said, "I have both eyes open, and I can't see anything!" Late that night I started to get my sight back. That scared the hell out of me.

**SS:** Did the dog step on a nerve?

**TC:** I think it was just trauma.

**SS:** You mentioned your babysitter. Was that a social worker on the set?

**TC:** No, under 18 you have to have a parent present, and my parents weren't very interested in coming and sitting on a stage all day. So often it was my aun. who would come, or we'd pay somebody. This day it happened to be some friend of my brother John.

**SS:** Why did you leave Disney?

**TC:** I was tired of doing the same thing. When I came to the end of the contract I told them that I didn't want to be renewed. It surprised me that they let me go without a fight. (Laughs) They were probably glad to get rid of me; I don't know. While I was there I did nothing except Disney stuff, but in the last year I did a MATINEE THEATRE. It was one

of the last MATINEE THEATRES and the first time I was ever in a live show; I was in damn near every scene. It scared the hell out of me. It's one of the two or three things that I was in that I never saw, and I'd love to see an old kinescope of it. But it so excited me and made me aware that there were things that I was not even getting a shot at, and that made me want to leave Disney. It was certainly nothing personal. I loved being there; they were great. The same thing with MY THREE SONS; I loved the people and had a great relationship. I gave them a year's notice, so there was no play for money or anything. I was just tired of it.

**SS:** THE SHAGGY DOG seems like a transition film: It's the last time you worked for Disney, but the first time you worked with Fred MacMurray.

**TC:** Yeah, but it wasn't the first time I knew Fred MacMurray. We lived across the street from him when I was about 13. I didn't know him well; I just knew he was Fred MacMurray. I knew his kid; not real well, just to play with occasionally.

**SS:** How was MacMurray to work with?

**TC:** He was great! To tell you the truth, I've worked with very few people I didn't like, but he was wonderful. I read that Tommy had a bad experience with him, and I can understand that—I saw Fred be abrupt; I saw him when I knew he was angry and had him speak sharply to me—but I never saw him blow up, ever, ever. But I was older than Tommy and I didn't have all that other dynamic working, and maybe that was part of it.

**SS:** Tommy characterizes MacMurray as being cold and aloof.

**TC:** See, that's the impression that people could get very easily around Fred. He was bashful; he was shy and private. He was a very private person, but he was a very warm, sweet guy. He'd do his thing, kind of politely nod and smile, and then go off to his trailer. He wouldn't hang around. If there were a lot of people, he'd muffle off. He wasn't rude or anything; he'd just muffle off, and that kind of benign turning away might be read in some people's minds as being aloof or stuck up.

**SS:** Was he instrumental in getting you cast in MY THREE SONS?

**TC:** No, it was that other fellow, John Stephens. Well, Fred certainly had to approve me. If he hadn't, I sure as hell wouldn't have been there, but he didn't ask for me. Billy Gray was going to do my part. I don't remember what the mess-up was, but there was some conflict or something, and he ended up not doing it. And Don Grady came in after the first day of rehearsal—in fact, I think we even shot one day with Billy Chapin as the second son. But Fred looked at it and didn't like the chemistry and said, "No, this is wrong." And so you've got a new brother the next day! (Laughs) Now, this is not cruel—it may have been tough, but it's not cruel. He was half owner of the show and he just thought the chemistry was wrong. It wasn't a personal thing at all; he had nothing against the actor.

**SS:** We've heard about the "MacMurray Method," meaning that all his shots were done at once, and then the show was filmed around him. Was that a hindrance?

**TC:** It was hard. He would come in for the first whatever-it-was—there were only so many days he would be in—and he would do his stuff. Our close-ups and the shots without him would be picked up sometime in the year to come. You did parts of many shows in



**Fred MacMurray (Steve), William Frawley (Bub), Tim Considine (Mike), Don Grady (Robbie), and Stanley Livingston (Chip): The Family Douglas on the popular MY THREE SONS.**

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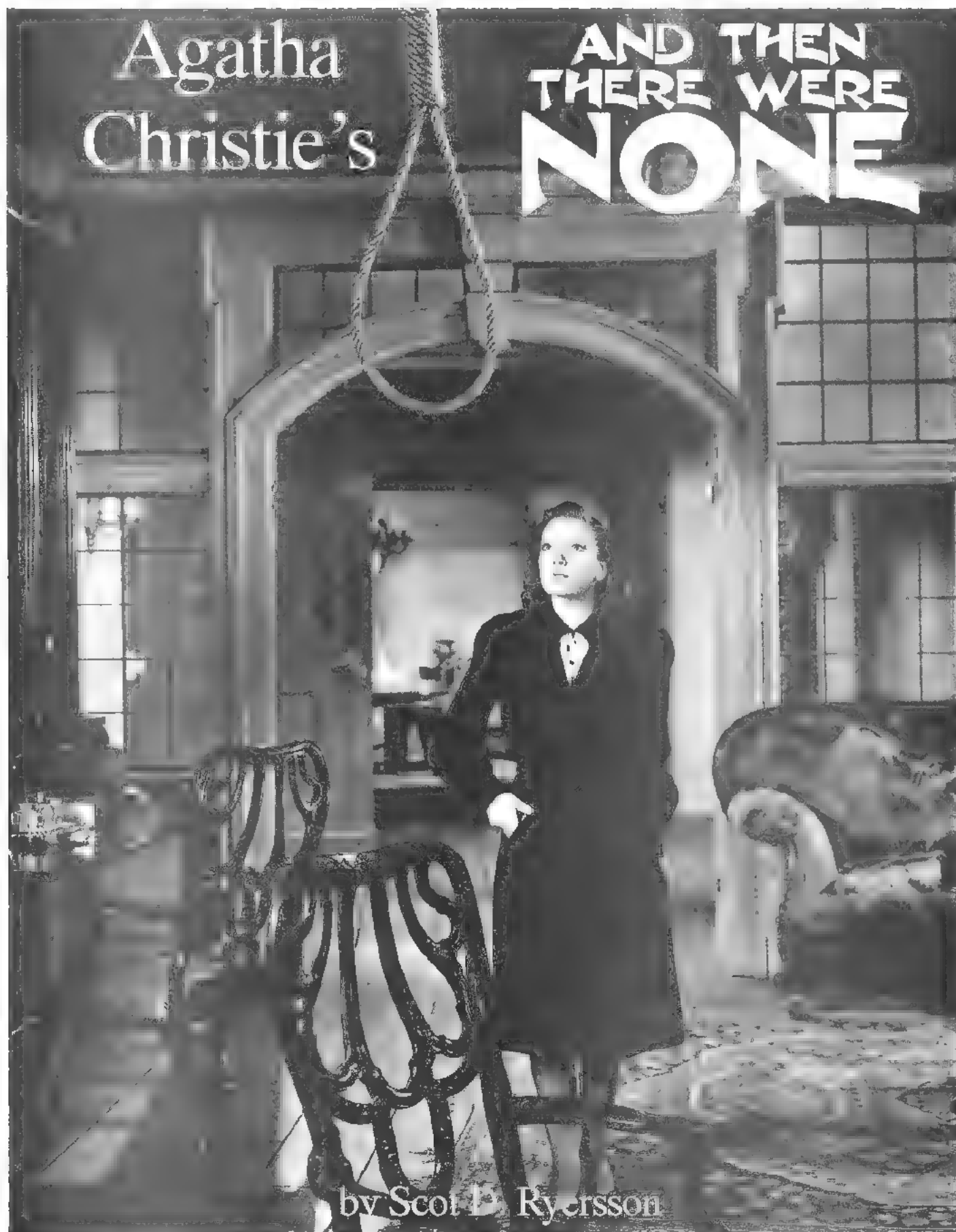
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Agatha  
Christie's

AND THEN  
THERE WERE  
**NONE**



by Scot E. Rycerson

*When the sea goes down, there will come from the mainland boats and men. And they will find ten dead bodies and an unsolved problem on Indian Island.*

With these two simple lines, Dame Agatha Christie ended what is undoubtedly her most famous novel, as well as one of the most well-known and acclaimed mysteries ever written—*And Then There Were None*.

Christie's novel was originally published in 1939, in Britain, as *Ten Little Niggers*. The title was taken from a ghastly but humorous Victorian music-hall song that told of the individual fates of 10 accident-prone boys. The song was written in 1869 by Frank Green for the aptly named Christy Minstrels, although Green's version was actually an adaptation of an 1868 American nursery song by Septimus Winner, called "Ten Little Indians." Winner had previously composed the successful tunes "Listen to the Mocking Bird" (1855) and "Where, Oh Where, Has My Little Dog Gone?" (1864).

Upon publication, the novel's title did not seem to be a problem. In the following years, though, Christie's agents became concerned that it might be considered racially offensive and cause some difficulties. Changes had to be made. The book was first reprinted as the better-known *Ten Little Indians*. Then, fearing the change to be a bit dubious, they tried *And Then There Were None*, and then *The Nursery Rhyme Murders*. Finally, in 1990, the year of Agatha Christie's centenary, the title officially became *And Then There Were None*.

There are probably very few who do not know, at least in passing, the plot of this macabre mystery: 10 unsuspecting people are invited to a remote and desolate island.

Arriving, they are accused of undetected past crimes and, one by one, executed. (Every murder is based on a line from the nursery rhyme.) The inspiration for this sinister story is said to have come from Dame Agatha's visit to a hotel on the lonely Burgh Island off the Devon coast of England.

Christie had set herself an enormous task in the telling of her tale. In *An Autobiography* (Dodd, Mead; 1977), she wrote

I had written the book *Ten Little Niggers* because it was so difficult to do that the idea had fascinated me. Ten people had to die without it becoming ridiculous or the murderer being obvious. I wrote the book after a tremendous amount of planning, and I was pleased with what I had made of it . . . it was well received and reviewed, but the person who was really pleased with it was myself, for I knew better than any critic how difficult it had been.

Christie was being rather modest concerning the book's being "well received and reviewed," since most critics were enthusiastic in their praise. The *Boston Transcript* wrote, "For absolute horror and complete bafflement Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* takes all the prizes." The *New York Times* stated,

"The whole thing is utterly impossible and utterly fascinating. It is the most baffling mystery Agatha Christie has ever written . . . it is a tall story, to be sure, but it could have happened." *Library Journal* cried, "It is Agatha Christie run wild," and *Spectator Magazine* pronounced it simply "Agatha Christie's masterpiece."

Dame Agatha's toughest audience, though, was her own family. Her husband, famed British archaeologist, Sir Max Mallowan, revealed in his autobiography, *Mallowan's Memoirs* (1977), that it was "one of the few novels in which I have guessed the culprit with a feeling of certainty for purely psychological reasons. This novel was read . . . and tried out at a house party in Devon, and great was Agatha's indignation when I won the prize for spotting the murderer—for the wrong reason."

All these accolades, coupled with the book's instant "classic" status, gave Christie the idea of turning the novel into a stage play. "I suppose it was *Ten Little Niggers* that set me on the path of being a playwright as well as an author of books," the Queen of Crime once explained.



Walter Huston takes center stage as Dr. Armstrong in 1945's *AND THEN THERE WERE NONE*, flanked by Louis Hayward as Philip Lombard and Roland Young as Blore the detective. **PREVIOUS PAGE:** Vera Claythorne (June Duprez) contemplates a subtle suggestion on the part of the killer.

She found adapting the story to the theatre an amusing challenge. There would be a cast of 11 actors and only one set. The producers were nervous at the outset, claiming that the theatrical version would seem laughable with so many corpses piling up on stage. Despite their reservation, the play, with its original title (*TEN LITTLE NIGGERS*), premiered on November 17, 1943, at the St. James's Theatre in London. It was a great success with critics and public alike. Unfortunately, because of the outbreak of war and the Blitz, it closed after a minimal 260 performances. The Broadway production (tactfully retitled *TEN LITTLE INDIANS*) opened one year later at the Broadhurst Theatre and fared much better, taking 425 curtain calls.

In the audience at one performance sat the young Ira Levin, future author of the novel *Rosemary's Baby* (1967) and the stage thriller *DEATHTRAP* (1978). In his introduction to *Agatha Christie's The Mousetrap and Other Plays* (Dodd, Mead & Co., 1978), he described the experience: "As those figures vanished one by one from the mantelpiece and the actors vanished one by one from the stage, I fell in love—with theatre that grips and dazzles and surprises. I was already a would-be novelist, thanks in part to the other Agatha Christies; now I was a would-be playwright, too." *TEN LITTLE INDIANS* continues to be immensely popular with schools and repertory companies.

There have been at least two very unusual productions of Christie's play: one in Nairobi, Kenya, where the title was changed to *TEN LITTLE REDSKINS*, and the other an amateur staging during World War Two at the Buchenwald concentration camp. Janet Morgan, Christie's official biographer, wrote in *Agatha Christie* (Knopf, 1985), "... a survivor later told Agatha that it

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sustained them. It is, moreover, equally interesting that Agatha, though touched by this story, found nothing unusual about it."

It is also worthy of note that Christie actually devised two entirely different endings for her masterpiece of mystery. In the novel itself, she used the last line from Frank Green's version of the rhyme, "He went and hanged himself and then there were none." When the time came for the stage adaptation, she knew audiences would want a "happier" ending, so she returned to the original Winner rhyme. "I must make two of the characters innocent," she explained, "to be reunited at the end and come safe out of the ordeal. This would not be contrary to the spirit of the original nursery rhyme, since there is one version . . . which ends, "He got married and then there were none."

Within a short while, Hollywood came to call at Christie's doorstep. Both RKO and Warner Bros. vied for the novel. But in 1945 the rights went to 20th Century Fox, which gave control of the film to French director Rene Clair. An odd choice to direct a mystery, Clair had built his reputation directing such light fantasy/farces as 1942's *I MARRIED A WITCH* (an adaptation of *The Passionate Witch*, the last, unfinished novel by Topper creator Thorne Smith) and 1944's *IT HAPPENED TOMORROW* (a Dick Powell/Linda Darnell feature in which a ghostly old gentleman provides reporter Powell with a newspaper that prints tomorrow's news today). Clair and screenwriter Dudley Nichols both rose to the occasion, making what has been called not only the best version of *And Then There Were None*, but also the most true-to-the-original filming of any of Dame Agatha's works.

78 SCARLET STREET

The film was cast with some of the best character actors in Hollywood, including top-billed Barry Fitzgerald and Walter Huston, Roland Young, C. Aubrey Smith, Judith Anderson, Richard Haydn, and Queenie Leonard. June Duprez, star of 1940's *THE THIEF OF BAGDAD*, provided the love interest for third-billed Louis Hayward. One notable change made for the screen was the setting. True, the story still took place on an isolated island, but the house itself had changed. In the novel, Christie took advantage of distinctly modern architecture, using gleaming chrome and steel to convey a sense of uneasiness. The film instead used a stereotypically gloomy, fog-enshrouded mansion where, one believed, anything horrible might occur. Other than a few name changes—Judge Wargrave became Judge Quincannon; General MacArthur, for obvious reasons, was altered to General Mandrake—the only character to undergo a major transformation was that of the book's young, handsome playboy, who became an exiled Russian prince named Nikki Starloff (the better to match the acting abilities of comic Mischa Auer).

Director Clair left his mark on the movie by using such techniques as having the characters warily spy on one another through keyholes and shooting an entire sequence by the light of a single match. The film, though a critical and popular success, was the last Clair made in America. Years later, C. Aubrey Smith reminisced about the making of *AND THEN THERE WERE NONE*:

It was one of those rare pictures where no corners were cut. Everything from the design to the costuming and the casting were first class, and with a really good script to work with all the actors gave splendid performances.

The director Rene Clair's ingenuity with the camera and lighting was the icing on the cake.



"First-class" definitely would not describe the subsequent versions of Agatha Christie's mystery. Just a few years later, the author's work made its television debut with a live BBC adaptation of *Ten Little Niggers*. A 90-minute special starring former screen Sherlock Holmes Arthur Wontner, Margery Bryce, and Paul Bentley, the program aired on Saturday, August 20, 1949. The broadcast began disastrously with a falling piece of scenery, which was followed by an actor saying his lines to the wrong camera, a shot of the crew moving their equipment to another set, and, worst of all, a recently deceased victim giving a most lively performance. Christie was not impressed:

Just as well I didn't see TEN LITTLE NIGGERS on the television! I hear General MacArthur, after being stabbed, got up and strolled away with his hands in his pockets, quite unaware he was in view. I should have been livid!

In 1959 there was another live program, this one entitled TEN LITTLE INDIANS. The show aired on American television and starred Nina Foch and Barry Jones.

In 1965, exactly 20 years after Rene Clair's superb version, Hollywood deemed it necessary to remake the film as TEN LITTLE INDIANS. Former British radio producer Harry Alan Towers acquired the rights for Seven-Arts Films. Towers immediately hired George Pollock, a veteran of the MGM Margaret Rutherford/Miss Marple films, to direct. Then all hell broke loose in adapting the story. The setting was inexplicably transferred to the Austrian Alps, where guests arrived by cable car. Christie's original playboy turned Russian prince was now a 60s pop star. The 65-year-old spinster, played with icy finesse by Judith Anderson in the 1945 version, metamorphosed into a self-centered young starlet with questionable morals. Even the murders themselves weren't sacrosanct. In the original novel and film, the butler's wife meets her end due to an overdose of sleeping pills. Obviously thinking this too sedate a demise, Pollock and screenwriters Peter Welbeck and Peter Yeldham had the unfortunate victim plunge to her death in the cable car.

The film was not improved by the addition of the first provocative love scene ever seen in an Agatha Christie film and an instructive William Castle type device known as a "Whodunnit Break," during which the audience was given 60 seconds to guess the identity of the murderer.

WYATT EARP star Hugh O'Brian, "GOLDFINGER Girl" Shirley Eaton, Wilfred Hyde-White, Stanley Holloway, Dennis Price, Daliah Lavi, and an amazingly miscast Fabian (as the pop star), all lent their talents to the film.

Reviewers were decidedly stinting in their praise. The *New York Times* wrote, "It would be foolish to say this remake comes within a country mile of that former movie version which was directed by Rene Clair."

The worst was yet to come. In 1975, spurred on by the spectacular triumph of the previous year's MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS, Towers and screenwriter Welbeck were back with a remake of their remake. (One wonders if the two had a personal vendetta against this particular mystery.) Made for Avco Embassy Films, it was poorly directed by Peter Collinson, whose only major achievement was THE ITALIAN JOB (1969).

The location was again changed, this time to a deserted hotel in the sands of the Iranian desert. No boat nor even a cable car was required, since guests now arrived by private helicopter. Presumably to sell the film worldwide, an international cast was assembled. Top-billed with Oliver Reed and Richard Attenborough were 60s sex-kitten Elke Sommer, Herbert Lom, Stephane Audran, and Goldfinger himself, Gert Frobe. Fabian was superseded by French singer/composer Charles Aznavour, who,



ABOVE: Butler Richard Haydn (the voice of the caterpillar in Walt Disney's 1951 animated feature ALICE IN WONDERLAND) eavesdrops as another victim is discovered. PREVIOUS PAGE: Judith Anderson and C. Aubrey Smith prepare to meet their doom in AND THEN THERE WERE NONE.

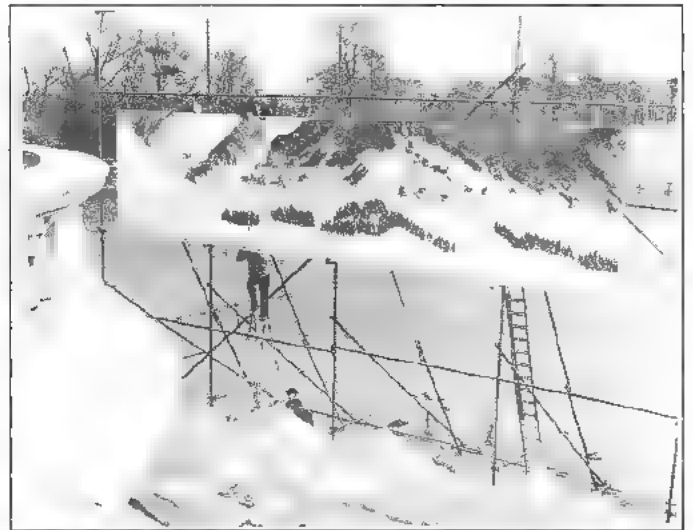
acting very much like Charles Aznavour, got to sing one of his own songs before his most-welcome demise. Orson Welles lent his tape-recorded voice to the victims' mysterious host.

The re-remake was unanimously panned. *New York Times* critic Vincent Canby wrote, in a review headlined "Christie Remake in Iran Is Global Disaster,"

TEN LITTLE INDIANS is less a movie than a movie deal, the kind that gets put together over drinks at the Carlton Hotel bar during the Cannes Film Festival . . . it is an international movie mess of the sort that damages the reputations of everyone connected with it . . . it was directed by Peter Collinson, who has made some bad movies in the past, but nothing to compare with this lethargic, seemingly post-synchronized version of Miss Christie's great old story.

Regrettably, Mr. Towers, even after these fiascos, couldn't leave well enough alone. In 1989, he resurrected the script yet





**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Ad art from the 1966 production of *TEN LITTLE INDIANS*, a snow-covered background to danger (the 1966 version), Hugh O'Brien (with flashlight) and the 1966 cast, Oliver Reed in the 1975 travesty, and Stanley Holloway (as Blore) examining the evidence (1966 again).



© 1974 The L.B. Foster Co.



*One tumbled overboard and then there were two: Vera and Philip (June Duprez and Louis Hayward) find the body of Blore (Roland Young), who hasn't so much tumbled overboard as had something tumble overboard on him. Note: The alternative version of the rhyme (in which a big bear hugs one) works rather more literally in the Agatha Christie original, in that the masonry flattening the poor detective is in the shape of a Bruin.*

again. In this outing, the film, with a screenplay by Jackson Hunsicker and Gerry O'Hara, and under the direction of Alan Birkinshaw, contained abysmal performances by Herbert Lom, Frank Stallone (Sylvester's brother), Donald Pleasence, and Brenda Vaccaro as an overweight, alcoholic lesbian. Having already exhausted snowy mountains and arid wastelands as settings, Towers transported the story to the African jungle, which explains the preproduction title of AGATHA CHRISTIE'S MURDER ON SAFARI. Christie's agents quickly stepped in, stating that the author never wrote a book with such a title, and once again it became TEN LITTLE INDIANS. *Library Journal*, one of the few publications to give the film attention, wrote

This latest TEN LITTLE INDIANS is, far and away, the most atrocious filming yet. Rather than attempting to solve the mystery, the ten people . . . vie for the most idiotic lines of dialogue . . . the ultimate identity of the killer is not the mystery here. The real enigma is what possessed Cannon Films to make this turkey.

Christie created a widely imitated format in her original novel. In brief, the elements include an isolated location from which escape or assistance from the outside world is impossible; a diverse group of people, related in their commitment of undetected crimes, who are systematically murdered according to a preconceived plan or theme; and the plan's relentless fulfillment.

Two well-known examples of this format, closest to Christie's original concept (although neither take place in an isolated setting), are the Vincent Price films THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES (1971) and THEATRE OF BLOOD (1973). In PHIBES, a group of London physicians are ingeniously and brutally snuffed out to atone for the operating-room death of Phibes' wife. The victims die in manners reminiscent of the plagues visited upon the pharaohs of ancient Egypt. In THEATRE OF BLOOD, a thoroughly mad actor decimates a circle of theatre critics to avenge himself for their vile reviews. Each murder is culled from the works of Shakespeare.

*Continued on page 97*

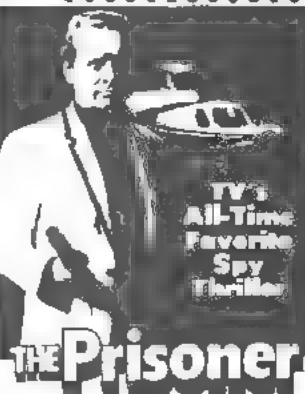
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# Our Man on Baker Street

## An Early Frost

There has been some spiffing sleuthing here on television in the U.K. these last few months.

Morse returned for a final series with three tip-top feature-length episodes. Eyes dampened as he drove off in his splendid red Jaguar into the Oxford dusk for the last time, accompanied by the evocative music of Barrington Pheloung. However, there are already rumours of a Christmas special.

Monsieur Poirot is also back on the air and, although the shows have excellent production values and a riveting central performance from David Suchet, they have reverted to the one-hour format, dramatising the rather weak short stories instead of the novels. We are so used to the two-hour canvas, now, that these mysteries seem a little trivial and/or rushed. Actually, one thing that niggles me about the sets on this show is that they are all Art

Deco. Now, not everywhere in the 1930s was like that. I'm sure some of the old houses in which the Belgian busybody solved murders would have been crumbling Victorian piles, or even older. It seems a case of the image of the programme being more important than reality—but then again, I hear you cry, what's reality got to do with Christie?

The real discovery of the season has been a series of three shows from Yorkshire Television featuring Detective Inspector Frost, played by David Jason, a well-known TV face here. Set in the North of England, *A TOUCH OF FROST* features labyrinthine mysteries investigated by the down-to-earth, somewhat rumpled DI Frost, a middle-aged cop with a talent for the dry quip and a penchant for upsetting his bosses. (Nothing new there, but, like many things, it is the way it's done that seems fresh.) Frost is already being labelled the "new" Morse and, although the character does not have the same charm

or intellectual appeal of Colin Dexter's detective, there is something fascinating about him, and the mysteries are certainly challenging and complex.

## New Belle on the Beat

The Anna Lee pilot has been aired, featuring Imogen Stubbs as the feisty female private eye with long legs, short skirts, and a difficult personal life. The programme was deemed a success and a series starts shooting in the spring.



## The Eligible Vampyre

And, of course, dear Sherlock came back to us with two very lush goodies: *THE LAST VAMPYRE* and *THE ELIGIBLE BACHELOR*. The move further away from Doyle is indicated by these titles. The programmes were generally well-received here by the press, but Sherlockians had a decidedly mixed reaction. Interestingly, *VAMPYRE* went out the same week that Coppola's *DRACULA* was released here, which gave a boost to each production. There is no definite news from Granada concerning future programmes, but all concerned, including producer June Wyndham Davies, stars Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke, and writer Jeremy Paul, are all keen to do more and are hoping for the green light soon. They are not alone.

—David Stuart Davies



© Yorkshire Television on

What, another nude shot in *Scarlet Street*? David Goodison, Tricia Thorne, Matt Bardock, and (RIGHT) David Jason as Detective Inspector Jack Frost.

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# Book Ends

## The Scarlet Street Review of Books

### POVERTY ROW HORRORS!

Tom Weaver

McFarland & Company, Inc., 1993  
Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640  
392 pages—\$36.50

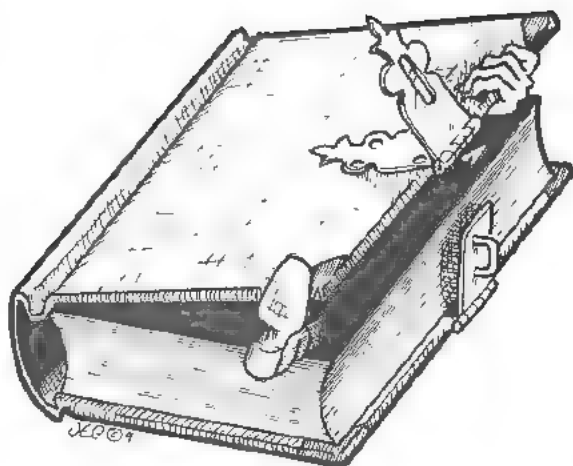
Those industrious movie-book publishers are at it again! They've left no stone unturned in covering the lucrative horror market from every conceivable angle: There are books devoted to the Frankenstein Monster and vampires, popular horror stars and directors; volumes on shockers old and new in grim profusion. Now, what should emerge from under yet another moss-covered rock but McFarland's *Poverty Row Horrors!*, a chronicle of those eminently forgettable Monogram, PRC, and Republic thrillers of the 40s. It didn't take much to produce a horror movie over at Hollywood's Poverty Row. Hire an out-of-work bogeyman (usually Bela Lugosi), dress up a stuntman in a cheap gorilla suit (or, better yet, round up a bunch of extras and call them zombies), and, *voilà*, you've got 60-odd minutes of thrills and chills—that is, if you scare easily and don't care much about logic.

Luckily, this book is vastly more entertaining than *THE MAD MONSTER* (1942), *VOODOO MAN* (1944), *DEVIL BAT'S DAUGHTER* (1946), or just about any of the 31 cinematic stinkers it spot-

lights. Tom Weaver, the jolly tour guide on this *Voyage to the Bottom of the Barrel*, writes with enthusiasm and unfailing wit about his subject, making for these films no artistic claims that he himself knows they cannot deliver. Instead, he's content to rate them for their campy entertainment value and, in the process, imparts plenty of production information and even outright gossip. The result is one of the liveliest, most informative, and probably funniest film reference books ever to come on the scene.

The author isn't afraid to take a gutsy stand, applying the executioner's axe to such acclaimed quickies as Frank Wisbar's *STRANGLER OF THE SWAMP* (1946) and, to a lesser extent, Edgar Ulmer's *BLUEBEARD* (1944). (His put down of the former is hilariously on-target.) On the other hand, he bravely comes to bat for such pet favorites as *RETURN OF THE APE MAN* (1944), a celluloid lobotomy case praised for its "almost professional look and plenty of action." In spite of Weaver's occasional bouts of wrongheadedness, he knows his stuff and keeps you coming back for more.

Included are a nice selection of stills, filmographies, and the usual cast and



credits lists. For good measure, Weaver polls a panel of film experts and buffs to gauge the order of merit of the nine horror movies Bela Lugosi completed under his Monogram contract. (I won't divulge the results; quality-wise, there isn't a dime's worth of difference between the 'best' and the 'worst.') You can't help but admire the dedication and, yes, love that comes through on every page of this highly readable volume.

*Poverty Row Horrors!* is about as ingratiating and user-friendly as any film book now on the shelves. The subject matter may be Poverty Row, but for many a horror buff, this book will be a leisurely stroll down Park Avenue.

—Jack R. Phillips

### FORTIES FILM TALK

Doug McClelland

McFarland & Co., 1992  
Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640  
447 pages—\$49.95

McFarland & Company, whose extensive and often overpriced catalogue of filmbooks range from the fact-filled heights of *Universal Horrors* (1990) to the error-riddled depths of the recent *Cinematic Vampires* (1992), have struck pure gold with *Forties Film Talk*, Doug McClelland's lively last word on the 1940s. The book's subtitle, *Oral Histories of Hollywood, with 120 Lobby Posters*, doesn't even begin to tell the story.

To start, McClelland can write. His preface, recounting the unanticipated rewards of interviewing actress Evelyn Keyes (who, in the author's eyes, is 40s style and class personified), is both charming and to the point. The remainder of the book is given over to the unforgettable voices of Miss Keyes' fellow film veterans. In Part One, to the visual accompaniment of dozens of lobby cards, we meet those stars, supporting players, and directors personally interviewed by the author—among them June Allyson, Joan Bennett, Alice Faye, Nina Foch,



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Farley Granger, Victor Mature, James Stewart, Claire Trevor, and Robert Wise. Following a special section featuring 14 lobby cards lovingly reproduced in color, Part Two literally showers the reader with stars. Culled from a variety of sources (most of which are listed in the book's extensive bibliography) and collected in 12 categories, these quotes and excerpts include priceless comments from such cinema legends (some immortal, some sadly forgotten) as Frank Capra, Marlene Dietrich, Sam Goldwyn, Gail Russell (recounting an incident from 1944's *THE UNINVITED*), Evelyn Ankers, Lon Chaney, Jr., Lauren Bacall, James Cagney, Fred MacMurray, Mitchell Leisen, Robert Mitchum, Ruth Roman, Billy Wilder, Dan Duryea ("Whenever I knock the gals around, as I did Joan Bennett in *SCARLET STREET*, my fan mail goes up"), Lee Patrick, Ida Lupino, Lloyd Nolan, Jane Frazee, Fritz Lang, Lana Turner... the celluloid rollcall seems endless.

Film historians will be mining conversational nuggets from *Forties Film Talk* for years to come. For those who make movie writing their occupation, Doug McClelland has supplied a one-stop shopping center on everyone from Iris Adrian to Fred Zinnemann. For the average, easy-going film fanatic, there simply isn't a more fun book on the market.

—Drew Sullivan

## THE MUSGRAVE RITUAL

Jeremy Paul

Ian Henry Publications, Ltd., 1992  
20 Park Drive  
Romford, Essex RM1 4LH  
39 pages—£5.45

Aficionados and out-and-out fanatical fans of the Granada TV Sherlock Holmes shows are in for a treat with the latest published script from that much-admired series. *THE MUSGRAVE RITUAL* was one of seven episodes, first aired in 1986, that introduced Edward Hardwicke as Dr. Watson, altering the series title from *THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* to *THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* in the process. These episodes are among the best in Granada's occasionally haphazard journey through the world of Conan Doyle, and Jeremy Paul's adaptation of "The Musgrave Ritual" more than holds its own in illusory company.

Conan Doyle's story, originally published in the May 1893 edition of *The Strand Magazine*, presented Paul with some intriguing structural problems. It is a tale told to Watson by Holmes, who is reflecting on some of his past cases. Paul solved the lack of immediacy in the story by bringing it into the present—the present, that is, of Holmes and Watson—and having the Baker Street duo become

involved in the mystery on a visit to the Great Detective's boyhood schoolmate, Sir Reginald Musgrave. The real inspiration on Paul's part, though, came in having this visit coincide with a particularly nasty bout of cocaine use by Holmes. (The series gave up a large slice of drama when it had the sleuth kick his habit several episodes later. Happily, this misguided effort to "clean up Holmes' act" hasn't as yet extended to the smoking of tobacco—although there's lately been a suspicious lack of violin playing.)

That Jeremy Paul did himself and Granada proud with *THE MUSGRAVE RITUAL* is evidenced by the fact that the episode won the Edgar Allan Poe Award from the Mystery Writers of America. The published script comes complete with photographs and an entertaining introduction by the author. Let's have more scripts from this remarkable series. In fact, let's have them all!

—Richard Valley

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beach house with the gun that killed him in her hand. She'd been drinking heavily the night before and had gone to Rice's home to demand an explanation for his calling off their engagement.

With Ione at a loss as to whether or not she actually pulled the trigger, defense lawyer Howard Mott hires the Goodisons, a British couple who happen to be highly-recommended hypnotists, to find out. After several sessions with Ione, however, the Goodisons mysteriously vanish without a trace.

German businessman Enno Glimm, whose firm suggested that Mott hire the Goodisons, turns next to WuDu Limited, a special English-based operation run by two lifelong friends, Artie Wu and Quincy Durant. WuDu—which Glimm continually calls "VooDoo;" hence the book's title—is not a private eye agency, but, as Artie Wu describes it, "a closely held liability company that does for others what they cannot do themselves."

And so *VOODOO LTD.* is off and running. This fast-paced, well-plotted Ross Thomas mystery grabs you on page one and doesn't let go until the very end. The author draws his characters and their milieu with an eye for detail, expertly creating the cynical, backstabbing world of Hollywood, where alliances are easily made and broken—for a price. As Artie Wu, Quincy Durant, and their comrades in arms skillfully weave their way through

this vipers' nest, the reader feels that he is meeting genuine, quirky people and not the cardboard cutouts of a typically clichéd, plot-driven whodunnit.

A droll, edge-of-your-seat mystery thriller, *VOODOO LTD.* is highly recommended for Scarlet Readers.

—Sean Farrell

# **PETER CUSHING: THE GENTLE MAN OF HORROR AND HIS 91 FILMS**

Deborah Del Vecchio

and Tom Johnson

McFarland & Co., 1992

Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640

465 pages—\$45.00

Peter Cushing was the man for many horror fans of the 50s, 60s, and early 70s. Unlike Vincent Price, whose efforts covering roughly the same period fluctuated between such finely-honed characterizations as his Roderick Usher in *HOUSE OF USHER* (1960) and such flamboyant, over-the-top turns as his Nicholas Medina in *THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM* (1961), Cushing could be expected to give his considerable best even when trapped in such relative drivel as *RI OOD BEAST TERROR* (1967). Of course, never giving a bad performance does not necessarily make one the world's greatest actor—many a legend has embarrassed himself publicly, Laurence ("I haf no son!")

Olivier included—but there is much to say for a star who never simply phones in his performance. (Let's face it; some stars whose reputations far outshine their abilities not only phone them in, but have to borrow change to do so.)

Let it be said that the claim "Peter Cushing has never given a bad performance," offered by Deborah Del Vecchio in the introduction to the present volume, is not one made by the actor himself. (He is not entirely happy, for instance, with his impersonation of Sherlock Holmes in several BBC television programs of the mid-60s.) Del Vecchio and co-author Tom Johnson, being fans, are not so critical. Their book is written from a fan's perspective, with a fan's enthusiasm and love; still, that does not automatically render worthless their work or opinions regarding Mr. Cushing and his work. Critical evaluation is not solely the province of those who find fault. Del Vecchio and Johnson take a dangerous stand: Unlike such highly-regarded critics as Pauline Kael (who, while heaping praise on her favorites, rarely fails to mention that movies are, when all is said and done, trash) the authors of *Peter Cushing: The Gentle Man of Horror* insist that both the object of their affection and the films in which he starred have value. Like Linda Loman in *DEATH OF A SALESMAN*, their motto is "Attention must be paid!" This puts them in the some-

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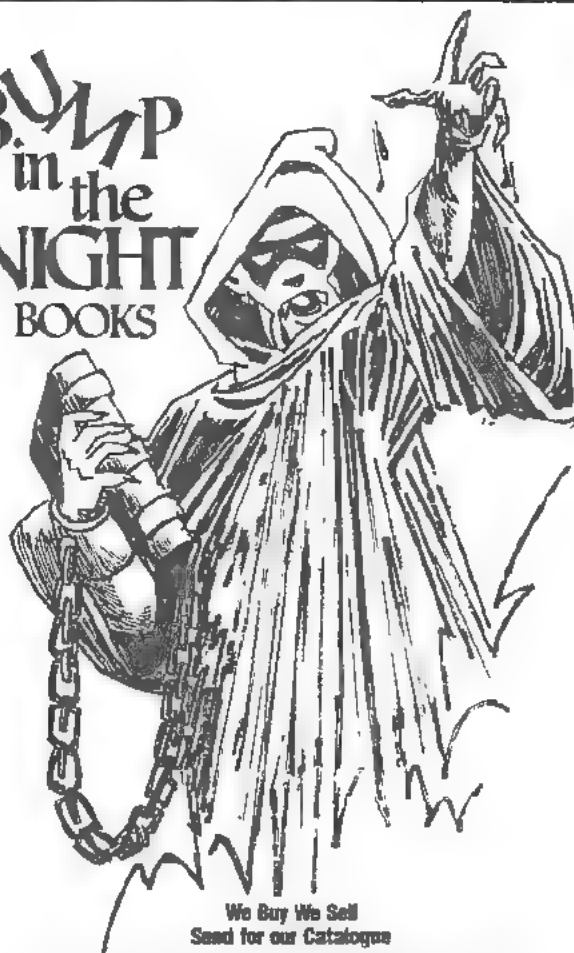
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times difficult position of having to defend what they like. Happily, though, the task is not an impossible one—not even a difficult one, really. For those who derive greater pleasure from a characterization skillfully etched than a characterization wretchedly botched, Mr. Cushing requires very little defending indeed.

Among the films rabid readers will find lovingly covered are *THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1956), *HORROR OF DRACULA* (1957), and *THE MUMMY* (1959), but the authors give equal time to such often-ignored gems as *THE BRIDES OF DRACULA* (1960), *CASH ON DEMAND* (1961), *NIGHT CREATURES* (1962), *THE GORGON* (1964), and *FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED* (1969). Nor do they let their admiration for their favorite star mar their clear-eyed appraisals of such frankly poor pictures as *SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN* (1969) and *DRACULA A.D. 1972* (1971). Entries for each film contain a complete cast and credits list, a synopsis, a commentary, and notes; the majority are accompanied by photos. In addition, Del Vecchio and Johnson interviewed many Cushing costars, among them Shane Briant, Veronica Carlson,

Hazel Court, Deborah Kerr, Francis Matthews, Douglas Wilmer, and Sir John Mills (who played Dr. Watson to Cushing's Holmes in 1984's *THE MASKS OF DEATH*). Their fond reminiscences add immeasurably to the pleasure of reading *Peter Cushing: The Gentle Man of Horror and His 91 Films*, and lend on-the-spot credence to the authors' high regard for one of horror's true greats.

—Drew Sullivan

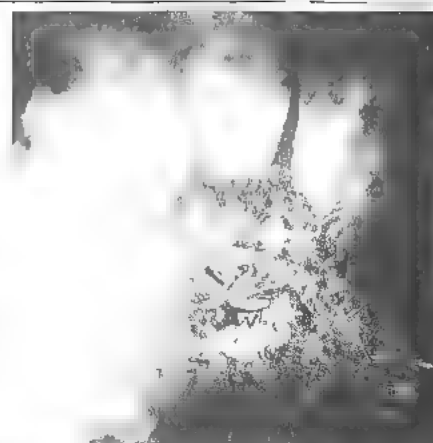
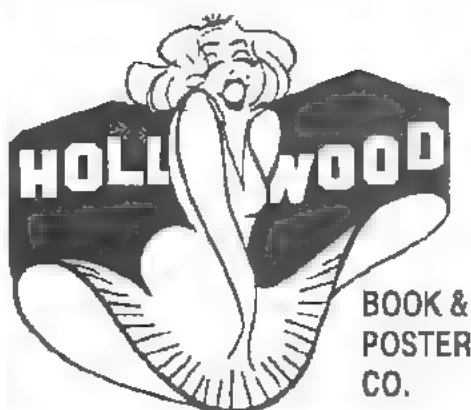
#### ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN: THE ORIGINAL 1948 SHOOTING SCRIPT

By Frederic Rinaldo, Robert Lees, and John Grant. Edited by Philip J. Riley  
MagicImage Filmbooks, 1990.  
167 pages—\$19.95

The MagicImage filmscript series proudly opens its collection of classic comedy scripts with *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, a neat segue from its line of vintage Universal horror-film scripts. The high quality of these books has been consistent, usually leaving no stone unturned in their coverage of production histories and behind-the-scenes information. With Greg Mank once again

on board, the reader is supplied with so many fascinating anecdotes that he begins to feel like an "insider" in the production process. This was the last film to reunite the studio's "big three"—Dracula (Bela Lugosi), Frankenstein's Monster (Glenn Strange), and the Wolf Man (Lon Chaney)—and, even though it's not a legitimate horror picture, *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* is notable, if only for the casting of Lugosi as Dracula for the second and last time on the screen.

The script itself, marked "revised final," provides the largest share of insights into the creation of this classic comedy. After only a few pages it becomes apparent that a wealth of improvisational material must have been contributed by Lou Costello, because much of his dialogue bears only a slight resemblance to what actually reached the screen. The "business" developed by the team with writer John Grant is very rarely alluded to, which is surprising, as it is Costello's asides that set the tone of the film. *THE BRAIN OF FRANKENSTEIN* (the production title) was hated by Lou on his first reading, and he probably felt that the dialogue written



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for Chick and Wilbur (Bud and Lou's characters, respectively) would fall flat. Absent, too, are any of the team's stock burlesque bits, which further put Lou off.

Included in this book are an introduction by John Landis; a generous number of behind-the-scenes photos, press-book and publicity reproductions; and the recollections of director Charles T. Barton, actress Jane Randolph, and Bud and Lou's surviving children. Another worthy addition to a fine series of books, *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* illustrates just how important Bud and Lou's input was to the finished film.

—Richard Scrivani

#### **THRILLERS: SEVEN DECADES OF CLASSIC FILM SUSPENSE**

**John McCarty**  
 Citadel, 1992  
 255 pages—\$17.95

*Thrillers* is the latest book from film historian John McCarty, perhaps best known as the author of *Splatter Movies: Breaking the Last Taboo of the Screen*. As its title states, McCarty's newest work deals with thrillers, a genre that can be combined with such other genres as Westerns, war movies, or romances, and still retain the basic structure of a film built on scenes of relentless tension.

*Thrillers* offers the reader 50 of what McCarty considers to be the best exam-

ples of the genre. The result is an insightful, entertaining reference book that is hard to put down. The plot of each film is detailed and analyzed by the author in concise essays filled with plenty of behind-the-scenes info. The book is also illustrated with an extensive collection of black-and-white photos.

The obvious classics are all here, among them *DOUBLE INDEMNITY* (1944); *SORRY, WRONG NUMBER* (1948); *REAR WINDOW* (1954); *THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE* (1962); and *CAPE FEAR* (1962); but what makes this book really interesting is the inclusion of such lesser-known films as *SPARROWS* (1926), a silent thriller starring Mary Pickford (America's Sweetheart) as a girl struggling to protect a group of children from murderous kidnappers.

*THE WINDOW*, a 1949 film with Bobby Driscoll as a boy who witnesses his neighbor committing a murder, is also covered. Directed by Ted Tetzlaff, who was Alfred Hitchcock's cinematographer on *NOTORIOUS* (1946), *THE WINDOW* was released five years before the Master's similarly-themed *REAR WINDOW*. Not coincidentally, both films were based on stories by noirish pulp writer Cornell Woolrich.

Scarlet Readers may take issue with certain films included by McCarty, but, though a few of these movies may be flawed, they still deliver the suspense

that earns them a place in this book. If nothing else, *Thrillers* provides its readers with some good choices for the next trip to the local video store.

—Sean Farrell

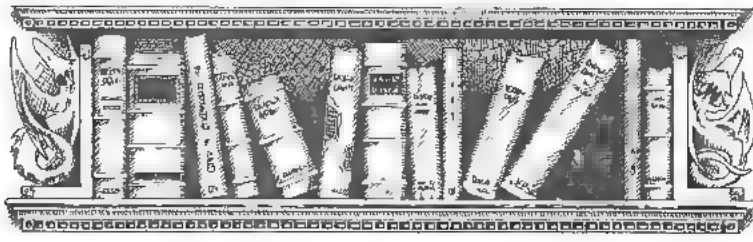
#### **THE NOEL COWARD MURDER CASE**

**George Baxt**  
 St. Martin's Press, 1992  
 199 Pages—\$17.95

English-born Noel Coward, who provided the script (from his own play) for the classic *BLITHE SPIRIT* (1945), began his career at age 12 and became one of the most loved and most controversial stars of stage and screen. He was a composer, author, playwright, producer, director, and *bon vivant*. Goddard Lieberman, who, among other things, wrote the liner notes for at least two Coward albums, had this to say: "It is senseless to attempt to give any biographical data on Noel Coward. He was born and apparently began at once to write plays, compose songs, sing, act, dance and possibly began to write his autobiographies."

He did not, however, have any hand in writing this murder mystery. You wouldn't know it. George Baxt, with his usual scrupulous research, has produced comic lyrics worthy of Coward himself.

*Continued on page 92*



## Seems Like Old Crimes

### DC ARCHIVE EDITIONS SUPERMAN VOLUME 1

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*Foreword by Mike Gold*

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It was a time of tentative growth in a country that had rediscovered the magnitude of stock-market forces. Rich men became poor and the poor became disenfranchised.

It was a day when children with a dime to spare could pick up a temporary fantasy in colorful comic books. Mega-physiquest men in brightly-colored leotards were able to solve calamities with their wit and brawn. Earth was saved countless times from certain doom. In these pages, solutions to world problems could finally be found.

And it all started with a rocketship from a distant planet.

A few years ago, DC Comics decided to capitalize on its rich history by reprinting the seminal stories of superhero comics, including the earliest adventures of such world-savers as Batman, Superman, Captain Marvel, and the Legion of Superheroes. Known as the Archive Editions, DC offers collectors an opportunity to travel through time, back to the thrilling days of yesteryear when Bob Kane, Jerry Siegel, and Joe Shuster were creating what is known today as Golden Age comicdom.

Original copies of these Golden Age classics are making news lately, fetching staggering prices at auctions and shows. If not for these Archive Editions, true enthusiasts would have no way of reading the comics that really started it all for this industry.

Initial comparisons between the Archive Editions are simple. All are bound with thick laminated and embossed covers. The heavy stock gloss pages are bright, clean, and crisp.

Thoroughly enjoyable are the forewords, written by such comic authorities as detective-novelist Max Allan Collins and comics historian Richard A. Lupoff. The background offered in these forewords helps to establish perspective.

The stories themselves reflect the serials that were the rage of the day. Trapped, fearing for his untimely death, the hero often pulled off some

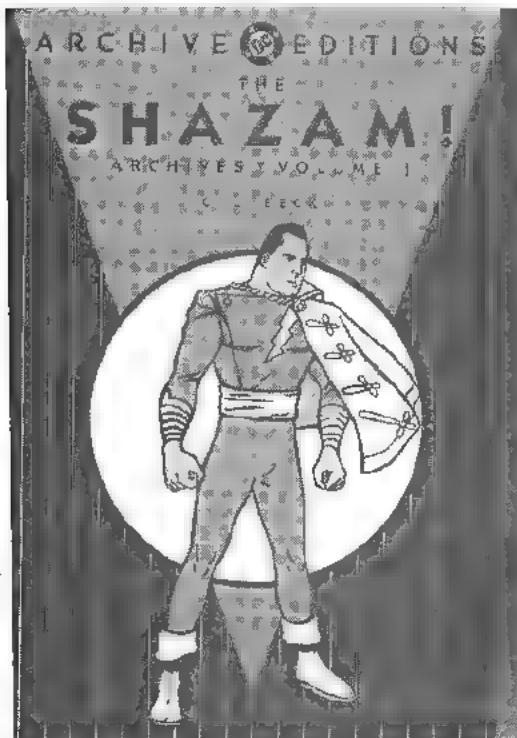
completely unbelievable escape. We knew that our hero would never really die, but we still held our collective breaths. Why? Possibly because we cared so much. Probably because we wished there was at least somebody out there with a backbone strong enough to support the woes of a war-torn world.

Each book has its own personality. The Batman stories dwell in a shadowy world stalked by bizarre villains, whereas the Captain Marvel tales are pure whimsy and childlike wonder. The Legion book portrays Superboy as an innocent farm-boy, whereas the Golden Age Superman is a tough, cynical hero who loves to toss around gangsters and bad puns.

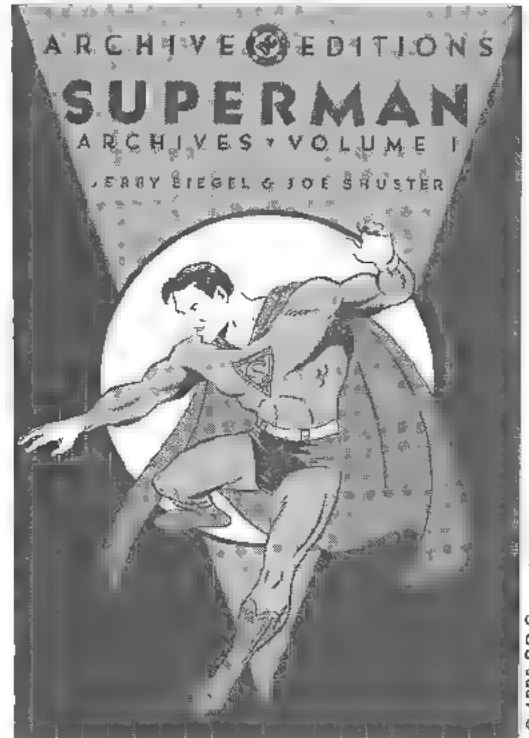
The Superman and Batman books may surprise fans of the contemporary versions of these heroes. Not only are the characters' morals and personalities different from that of today's interpretations, their powers and abilities are as well. For example, Superman's powers of flight and invulnerability were significantly limited in the original Siegel and Shuster comics. Sure, Supes was strong, but he didn't really fly and he was hardly the powerhouse we know today. And, like the Batman of the Golden Age, Superman had no qualms about killing a few criminals along the way. The "oath to never take a life" came later for these obsessed, wisecracking crimebusters.

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*Continued on page 93*



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## Peter Cushing

The Gentle Man  
 of Horror  
 and His 91 Films  
 Deborah Del Vecchio  
 and Tom Johnson



From his film debut in *THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK* (1939) through *BIGGLES* (1985), the career and movies of Peter Cushing are examined. Using inter-views and extensive personal correspondence, the authors provide Cushing's own views on many of his 91 films. A plot synopsis for each film is followed by production and cast credits, year produced and alternate titles.

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Yesterday was gray, the day be-  
 fore was blue  
 I am in the pink, darling how are  
 you?

Sally Ann Howes, the singer/actress perhaps best known to *Scarlet Readers* as one of the stars of 1945's *DEAD OF NIGHT*, was so enthralled with Baxt's lyricism that she approached him for permission to perform his tunes in her show. For readers of this book, this will be an act not to miss.

The time is 1935. An American woman, Maxine Howard, is dead in Hong Kong. Detective Inspector Wang of the Shanghai police suspects that she was kidnapped there "by an organization in the States that specializes in supplying Asian houses with girls." The woman's sister and brother-in-law, Electra and Dan Parrish (who practice voodoo), as well as Jacob Singer of the New York City police, are waiting for Wang to arrive with the body. Casey Sterne, a former private detective and now a government agent, is missing one of his operatives. Society-girl-turned-singer Diana Headman is opening at the new nightclub *The Cascades*, located on the fringe of Hell's Kitchen and owned by the unlikely gangster trio of Vivaldi, Beethoven, and Bizet. Diana's would-be beau, author Nicholas Benson, is nosing

around, trying to get information for a crime story. Noel Coward, who has rented a flat belonging to Diana's mother, Millicent, has just agreed to headline at *The Cascades* on opening night. The show will also feature the Parrishes, as well as Jimmy Durante.

Edna, Angie, and Trixie, who are in the chorus, happen to be the owners' girls. They're looked after by Hatue Beavers, who puts great store in what her Grandma Sadie (who is advised by a crystal ball) has to say. Edna once considered carrying on an affair with Singer's assistant, Abel Graham. She has been meeting privately with him ever since.

Jacob Singer, well-known on the force as a friend to many a Hollywood and Broadway name, stops by rehearsals to see the Parrishes and to chat with his new acquaintance, Noel Coward. They met over cocktails with Dorothy Parker.

Everyone is now in attendance at the nightclub, and another murder is committed—in clear view of everyone. But no one can figure out whodunnit! With the help of Coward, whose reputation for polishing even the smallest detail is well-known to Singer, the murder is eventually solved—both murders, in fact, but not before general mayhem occurs just as the show is about to open.

Of particular interest in this book are the discussions of voodoo: its roots,

practices, and consequences. Whether based on fact or merely a figment of the author's vivid imagination, you'll come away from *The Noel Coward Murder Case* believing that such things are possible.

Baxt, as usual, creates an atmosphere that's hard to shake, even after the book is finished and you've begun to read something new. The mind returns to the New York nightlife, the smoky bar in the cheap hotel, the voodoo rites practiced up in Harlem, and the words of Grandma Sadie: "It's the hand of Satan rockin' that evil boat."

—Jessie Lilley

## GRAVEN IMAGES

Edited by Ronald V. Borst,  
 Keith Burns, and Leith Adams  
 Grove Press, 1992  
 240 pages—\$50.00

Here's a book that lives up to its subtitle: *The Best of Horror, Fantasy, and Science-Fiction Film Art from the Collection of Ronald V. Borst*. There's no need for exaggeration here. Ron Borst has amassed a collection of horror-movie posters and memorabilia that is undoubtedly the best in the world. His rarest pieces, several of which are one-of-a-kind, are reproduced along with hundreds of others in this all-inclusive survey of American and European poster art.

The icing on the cake is a group of essays by an all-star line-up of horror and science-fiction writers, one introducing each decade (Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury, Harlan Ellison, Peter Straub, and Clive Barker tackle the 20s through the 60s, respectively), along with the introduction by Stephen King and "overview" by Forry Ackerman. The scribes' reminiscences of their childhood induction into the world of horror movies, often battling disapproving parents and hoarding allowance money in order to secure admission to their local Bijous, are charming and fun to read. But these literary asides are just a diversion alongside the fabulous array of window and lobby cards, ad mats, pressbook covers, and posters that are crammed on every page.

Readers are guaranteed to have their hands full picking favorites from among the rarities. There's the incredible one-sheet of *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* (1925) depicting Lon Chaney's red-robed Erik swimming underwater, about to drag an unsuspecting victim to his doom... the art-deco-style French poster of *KING KONG* (1933) perched high atop the Empire State... the stunning montage of images from the six-sheet of *WEREWOLF OF LONDON* (1935)... the mesmerizing gaze of Bela Lugosi emblazoned on the six-sheet of *WHITE ZOMBIE* (1932). There's hardly

a major genre title that isn't represented, going as far back as *THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI* (1919) and finishing with 2001: *A SPACE ODYSSEY* (1968).

To boot, this treasure trove is truly of art-book quality, printed on acid-free stock and in full, gorgeous color. *Graven Images* handily rates four stars and is a best buy even with a \$50 cover price.

—Michael Brunas

## OLD CRIMES

*Continued from page 91*

zam!" It's almost inconceivable to reason that Billy would ever want to return to being a mere prepubescent radio newscaster after being Captain Marvel and getting to kick the ass of mad Dr. Sivana. But, that's comics.

If I had to choose a book most worthy of parody, it would be the Legion of Superheroes comic. In this incredible series, we meet the superheroes of the future and their elite club. Each Legionnaire has one specific and self-explanatory superpower: Chameleon Boy (Super-Disguise), Lightning Lad (Super Lightning), Saturn Girl (Super-Thought-Casting), Sun Boy (Super-Radiance), and my own favorite, Bouncing Boy (Super-Bouncing).

These futuristic kids travel through time in a plastic bubble to offer Small-

ville's Superboy a chance for Legion membership. Predictably, young Supes fails to gain membership, but he does befriend the equally naive Legionnaires.

The Legion Edition also offers us our first glimpses of the Super Family, and a lasting hero named Supergirl. Her success was the catalyst for the introduction of other, less-memorable Kryptonian natives, including Krypto the Super Dog, Streaky the Super Cat, Beepo the Super Monkey, and an unnamed equine called only the Super Horse.

Although these characters may seem absurd or campy, they are all part of the rich history of comic books, which were crafted specifically with children in mind. In fact, many of the lovable heroes introduced in the Golden Age can be credited as the inspiration for some popular modern comic character.

The stories bound in these wonderful editions are often farfetched and contrived, but without doubt they are stimulating and fun. Comparatively speaking, they are much less pretentious than much of the trash being churned out today. After all, they are the tall tales of a society hungry for escape and willing to experiment with the boundaries of a new art form. It's often said that Kane, Seigel, and Shuster didn't know they were making history. That's the best part.

—Buddy Scalera

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DC threw the first punch. Marvel took the blow. Now Marvel is punching back.

Last issue, we previewed DC Comic's innovative Vertigo line, which gathers most of DC's adult oriented titles under one easy-to-spot imprint. Not only was Vertigo a good idea, the market was ready. Audiences have been hungry for quality comics, and Vertigo seems primed to claim a significant market share.

This issue, we break the news that Marvel Comics Group is also taking a new approach to publishing their adult titles. Soon to hit the stands will be at least four new Marvel titles under the Heavyhitters imprint, followed closely by the summer release of *Barkerverse*, a new Marvel Universe based on characters created by author Clive Barker.

Can Marvel's Heavyhitters and *Barkerverse* deliver a combination punch powerful enough to stagger the Vertigo giant? With new and revived books such as *Midnight Man* by Howard (The Shadow) Chaykin and *The Trouble with Girls* by Gerard (Green Lantern) Jones and Bret Blevins, Heavyhitters began to chip away at the DC market in March 1993. *Barkerverse* titles are scheduled to begin appearing in Summer 1993.

Marvel contends that because all Heavyhitters titles are creator-owned, there is an incentive for quality material. Marvel spokesman Gary Guzzo explained that the Heavyhitter titles were not solicited as adult titles. "They were not necessarily geared for a more mature audience," said Guzzo. "But it seems to be going in that direction."

While some of the Heavyhitters titles seem a mere extension of the superhero market already established for 15-year-old-boys, *Midnight Man* and *The Trouble with Girls* certainly bring quality and intelligence to an adult reader. *Midnight Man* is a four-issue miniseries about a cult that adopts a new hero every 15 years. Previews of Issue # 1 are somewhat cloudy, but remarkably interesting. It seems that the series

will be an unfolding mystery, revealing details as needed. The art and dialogue are superior and enough to keep mystery buffs turning the pages. On a lighter note, *Girls* parodies the James Bond/Nick Fury super-agent genre. For anybody who finds super-agent or detective machismo a little hard to swallow, it's a truly funny comic. Jones puts the title character, Lester Girls, into ludicrous situations with dangerous criminals and throngs of women who desire only to sample his historic libido and exaggerated physique.

Vying for regular market shares will be such promising new comics as *Sandman Mystery Theatre* by Matt (Grendel) Wagner and Guy (Baker Street) Davis. The comic is loosely related to Neil Gaiman's immensely popular *Sandman* series. Wagner's *Sandman*, however, is the Golden Age hero who spent most of his comic life in the Justice Society, a 1930s high-society detective working outside the law. With his trademark trenchcoat and gas mask, the Sandman investigates gangsters and debutantes, blasting chemical sand in the faces of his enemies. Meanwhile, his alter ego (Wesley Dodds) spends his time slipping through the parties of elite, post-Depression brats. Complemented by Davis' noirish art, Wagner's flair for odd story details should ensure this book's success with classic mystery buffs.

Can Marvel reclaim the audience that it captured during the 60s with *Spider-Man* and the *Fantastic Four*? It won't be easy. With *Sandman*, *Animal Man*, *Swamp Thing*, and *Hellblazer*, DC has gained a loyal following in the adult market. According to Vertigo Group Editor Karen Berger, DC plans to produce up to 24 titles with a "Vertigo spin."

"*Death* and *Enigma* are doing really well," said Berger of the first two new Vertigo comics.

With competition this tough, can Marvel deliver a knockout punch? Or will they just throw jabs at the champ? It's a wait-and-see situation, but it'll be fun to see these corporate giants duke it out. Knockout or draw, it's the consumer who comes out victorious.

\*\*\*

We who spend an inordinate amount of time reading comics often hope to meet the creators of our favorites.

Make an exception, though, and try not to run into anybody who works on Tundra's horror flagship, *Taboo*. It's scary to think that these people participate in society without supervision! If true horror is universal, *Taboo* may be too scary for international pop culture. Then again, maybe this is the wake-up call pop culture needs.

Including everything from the deranged to the terrifying, *Taboo* (co-published by SpiderBaby Graphics)

is bizarre, funny, and undeniably paranoid. Copublisher Stephen Bissette's criteria for inclusion in *Taboo*: "We want stories that disturb the creator."

That seems to be an understatement when talking about a comic that was once seized by both British and Canadian customs for sexual exploitation. "We're living in a society that tolerates sado-masochistic views of sex," says Bissette, launching a stream of pop culture examples from movies to Madonna. "It just doesn't tolerate sexual exploration, particularly visual exploration."

Elements of sexual exploration in *Taboo 6* include Alan (Killing Joke) Moore and Melinda Gebbie's *Last Girls*. Blatantly sexual, Moore's coming-of-age tale is a visual representation of naughty Victorian novels. It's hardly scary, but it does fit Bissette's "disturbing" criteria.

For terror, read *Blue Angel* by Tim Lucas and Stephen Blue or *Eyes of the Cat* by Alejandro Jodorowsky and Moebius. You'll leave on a nightlight.

Claiming "big names don't mean anything," *Taboo* seems nevertheless to have attracted such grand-marquee-size names as Moore, Charles Burns, Charles Vess, Neil Gaiman, Jean "Moebius" Giraud, and Dave Sim, who had a hand in *Taboo's* birth. Big names or not, the quarterly promises to become a leader in the horror comics field.

"We're hoping to open the eyes of the creative community," says Bissette. "Comics are viewed as some bastard form of children's literature, rather than an art form, which they are."

*Taboo's Book of the Dead* is due in July and *Taboo 8* in August. Issues can be found in specialty shops and from Tundra's mail-order branch.

—Buddy Scalera



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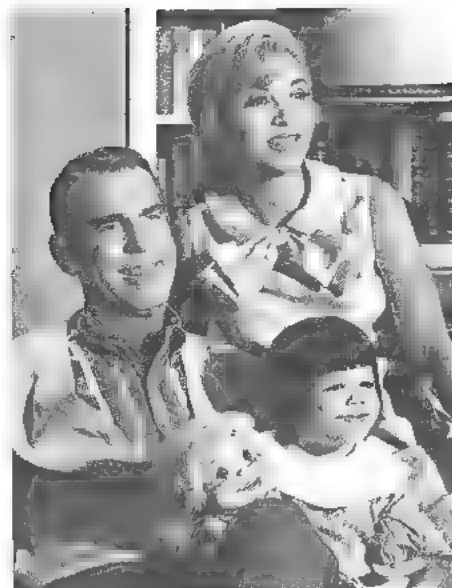
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In 1968, Beverly Garland moved into *THE MAD ROOM*. Could her madness have been the result of playing sitcom wives (opposite Bing Crosby and Fred MacMurray) on *THE BING CROSBY SHOW* and *MY THREE SONS*?

## BEVERLY GARLAND

*Continued from page 44*

**BG:** Fred was so charming, so conservative and cute; he was like a teddy bear. You know, that series had been on for nine years before I walked in, and they just made me feel like I'd been there for nine years! *MY THREE SONS* was shot in a very strange way, because MacMurray never did want to do a series. Don Fedderson told him that if he did it, he would only have to work three months out of the year. And Fred said, "Well, if you can figure that one out, I'll do it." So Don Fedderson figured it out; when we started each season we had every script, every bit of wardrobe, every single solitary thing ready to shoot. We would shoot anywhere from four to six different scripts a day and then we would do all of Fred's work, all his close-ups and all his two-shots—and then he would leave and go to Europe, or go hunting, or do whatever he wanted, and we would come back and finish everything. I had a young lady by the name of Katy Barrett who was my Fred MacMurray; I did all my scenes with her.

**SS:** Did she have a pipe and all that?

**BG:** She had a pipe and she was very tall. (Laughs) You know, I worked with her more than I worked with Fred MacMurray. It was sort of an interesting way to work. There were times when I'd walk down the stairs laughing and they'd say, "No, no, no, no, no! This is the time when the baby has the mumps and you're very upset." "Oh! Okay." And you could never change your hair. You

had to wear the same hair throughout the season; whatever you started with, that was your hair.

**SS:** It must have been difficult. Still, when most films are shot, you're not actually talking to the actor in close-up.

**BG:** In those days, we did. Actors worked with other actors; good actors would always do their close-up with you. Bad actors let the lady who holds the script do that. But good actors work with you—if you're gonna have your close-up, then I'm gonna stand by the camera and give you my lines so that you can react to me, not the lady who's holding the God-damned book!

**SS:** It improves the film.

**BG:** Well, yeah. People are certainly going to react differently to me than to the lady who holds the book. I remember when Fred and I had just done a scene, a funny scene, washing the dishes. It was my time for my close-up and he said, "I'm gonna stay and do your close-up with you." And I said, "What?" And he said, "I'm gonna stay and do your close-up with you. 'Cause it's a very funny scene." I said, "You're going to stay? And do my close-up with me?" Well, I mean, I couldn't even do it! I was so used to Katy Barrett; I could not work with Fred MacMurray. (Laughs)

**SS:** (Laughs) Who is this stranger?

**BG:** (Laughs) Who is this guy? Bring me my Katy Barrett, please.

**SS:** Was Fred MacMurray really tight with a dollar?

**BG:** Oh, yes. It was very evident. I remember the wardrobe man came to Fred one day and said, "You know, Fred, I think we ought to buy some new shirts. We've had these for a long, long time." And Fred looked at him and said, "Can't you just change the collars?"

**SS:** (Laughs) That's priceless!

**BG:** You know, there's a wonderful story that they tell. A man goes up to heaven and says, "You know, God, I want something to last me for the rest of my time." And God says, "All right, I'll tell you what. Take this spoon and put the Sahara Desert into the Gobi Desert and the Gobi Desert into the Sahara Desert." And so the man does, and 5000 years go by and he comes back to God and says, "I want something to last me for the rest of my time." And God says, "Okay, take this spoon and move the Pacific Ocean into the Atlantic Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean into the Pacific Ocean." Ten thousand years go by, and the guy comes back and says, "You don't seem to understand that I want something to last me for the rest of my time." And God says, "Okay. I'll tell you what you do. You go down to the Beverly Hills Country Club and sit at the bar and wait for Fred MacMurray to buy you a drink." (Laughs)

**SS:** (Laughs) Oh, that's great!

**BG:** That is my favorite.

**SS:** You've played tough women and hapless heroines and sitcom wives. Which do you think is closest to you?

**BG:** Well, I think the strong, domineering kind of women are probably closest to me: they're the kind of women I like to play. Like I told you, I love to play the woman with no makeup who looks like the wrath of God. I would love to do a Western, you know, going across the plains in a covered wagon. That's the kind of stuff I like.

**SS:** Action and adventure.

**BG:** A lot of action, a lot of hell, and a lot of looking like the wrath of—whatever. That's the kind of movie that I'd like to be in. (Laughs)

Kevin G. Shinnick has written articles for *Videooze*. He is a regular contributor to *Scarlet Street*.

## RICHARD GORDON

*Continued from page 11*

when I asked him over lunch whether he had a particular kind of film in mind, he proposed a remake of one of George Arliss' early sound film classics. Regrettably I was not in a position to set up that kind of production. Later, financial circumstances forced him to return to horror films at AIP. He was every inch the English gentleman. He—and that other great English gentleman, Boris Karloff—must have had a wonderful time during the making of *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*.

As a footnote, *THE DREAM MACHINE* became *THE ELECTRONIC MONSTER*, the screenplay was rewritten to make the scientist less than a leading role, and I coproduced the film with Nat Cohen (Anglo Amalgamated), bringing Rod Cameron and Mary Murphy from Hollywood to London to costar in it. That fine British character, Peter Illing, played the reduced part that Rathbone turned down. Seeing the film today, I have to admit that Basil was right!

Yours sincerely,  
Richard Gordon

## MOUSELAND

*Continued from page 58*

serial. Another *SPIN AND MARTY* sequel immediately followed it (busy days for Tim Considine). This in turn

was followed by a British-made serial entitled *CLINT AND MAC*, directed by none other than Hammer Films' Terence Fisher. Disney's last serial was *AN-NETTE*, about which the title says all.

Yet it's the Hardy Boys that we remember. No one can deny that Frank and Joe represent an unrealistic, sugar-coated view of adolescence, a world in which adults are supporting players and the biggest danger facing a teenager is being locked in a dark room by an unseen assailant—but neither can one deny that visiting that strange world, no matter what your age, is kind of fun. Actually, it's a heckuva lot of fun.



## TOMMY KIRK

*Continued from page 69*

any bad feelings. I enjoy my life, now. I have good friends. I feel good about having been in a few movies that will be remembered. I've made a little contribution to the country I was born in, and now I consider myself retired. I don't have the temperament to be an actor; I don't love it. I'm essentially a very shy person and very private. It's hard for me to reveal myself in front of a camera. It's not natural for me. All I wanna do is enjoy my retirement and have a life of peace and quiet, and enjoy my friends and pay my taxes, be a good citizen. I have no desire to work in films again.

SS: None whatsoever?

TK: None whatsoever.

SS: You don't want to live in the past...  
TK: That's right. Exactly. I don't live in the past. I can talk about it; I can revisit it, but I've accepted responsibility for my life and my actions, and I cannot play the hypocrite. I will not deny anything. I can't wear two faces, and people can make of it what they please. Everything I told you is the truth.



## WERE NONE

*Continued from page 81*

Though used in a much more diluted fashion, Christie's concept has been adopted by the more recent "slasher" genre, both *HALLOWEEN* (1978) and *FRIDAY THE 13th* (1980) being the clearest examples. Each film retains several of Christie's ideas, but the figure of the mastermind has been reduced to that of a soulless killing machine perpetrating gruesome murders upon a group of (often) innocent victims. Though there are exceptions, many of these films lack what makes Christie's tale unforgettable: an original plot to intrigue the viewer.

Throughout her career, Agatha Christie successfully turned to nursery rhymes many times (e.g., *Crooked House*; *A Pocketful of Rye*; *One, Two, Buckle My Shoe*). However, she never again devised a mystery as macabre or as brilliantly wicked as *And Then There Were None*.



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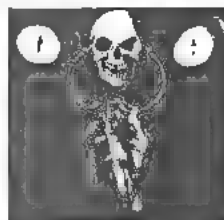
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A famous image from *PATTON* (1970), with Tim Considine in the role of the shell-shocked soldier who gets slapped. "God, we must have shot that every way imaginable," Tim recalls, "but George C. Scott was very good at pulling his punches."

## CONSIDINE

Continued from page 74

one day, which was tough because you'd forget the story line. I think our record was parts of 13 shows in one day. We never had a name for it, it was not the "MacMurray Method" or anything like that.

**SS:** Shooting the show must have been murder on the costumer.

**TC:** Everybody had it tough. The lighting had to be the same; it was a tough deal. As much as I could, I wore the same things and tried to be conservative in the way I dressed so I wouldn't have to go nuts doing all these changes. But in truth, in film you rarely get the luxury of shooting in sequence, anyway, so it was just that to a greater degree.

**SS:** What was it like working with William Frawley, who played Bub?

**TC:** Funny! He was a character. He died on the show—well, not right there—but he was elderly. He was very much what you saw: a grumpy, funny, sometimes aggressive, wonderful guy who in the space of 10 seconds could go from being really obnoxious and intimidating to absolutely huggable charming. My job a lot of times was to accompany him. I was the eldest of the kids, and I was the only one who could go where he went, drink with him, do whatever. I used to take him to lunch at Nickodell's and he'd have a couple of belts, but if I wasn't there he'd never come back. So it was an unwritten law that I got him back to the stage. We had a really interesting, good relationship.

**SS:** Did you leave *MY THREE SONS* because you were tired again?

**TC:** Well, there was something else happening. I had by that time written and directed, and I would have stayed if they had let me direct half the shows. That was the only thing that would have been new and interesting and different, and I believe they might have let me if we had stayed with the same network. But when my contract was up, the show's contract was up, too, and they sold it to CBS. I think it might have been okay with ABC, but CBS said no, and offered a lower number of shows. I just wasn't interested. I wanted to direct it or I didn't want to do it; that was understood for a long time. There was no acrimony and there was no hassle. It was really time to move on.

**SS:** You wrote a couple of *MY THREE SONS*, didn't you?

**TC:** Yeah, I think we did three of them. When I say "we" I mean my brother John and I. John is a very successful writer.

**SS:** Brothers, real or fictional, seem to be a running motif in your career. There's *THE HARDY BOYS*, *MY THREE SONS*, your work with John...

**TC:** Yeah, that's true. I never thought about it in those terms, but it's true.

**SS:** Why did you stop acting?

**TC:** I got less and less from it, was less and less interested in it. What remained mostly were the parts that I didn't like. All the stuff I did was the same: I played the juvenile delinquent, the whiny kid, or the boy next door; I got tired of it. And the rest of the life I didn't care that much for—always being "on," always going into other people's offices and trying

to be who they want you to be; that part of it was not that appealing. I grew my hair long and kind of went in a different direction. The last thing I did—other than *SIMON AND SIMON*—was *THE DARING DOBERMANS*.

**SS:** Was that the movie with Fred Astaire?

**TC:** No. Believe me, no. It was some Goddamn Doberman pinscher; it wasn't Fred Astaire.

**SS:** Astaire did a movie with Dobermans.

**TC:** Fred Astaire did? Oh, well, Fred Astaire and I did Doberman pictures! (Laughs) I'm going to tell that story from now on! But now I'm old enough to come back and do completely different stuff, nothing that I've ever done before.

**SS:** Does that mean you're getting back in the swim?

**TC:** I have an agent.

**SS:** So you're out there looking for work?

**TC:** I'm not out looking, but he is, and if it happens, it happens. Maybe people would go, "Oh, who cares?" I know I certainly would. But maybe some other people wouldn't.

**SS:** Do you ever miss the "kid time" that you lost being an actor?

**TC:** My wife and friends would argue that I've had it ever since! (Laughs) I don't know. I'm sure I missed a great deal, but I'm also sure I experienced a great deal. I see these talk shows and watch all these kid actors saying how terrible it was and how fucked up they were by what they did. I don't think I was, through no talent of my own. At least not mortally wounded. It was generally a pretty good experience for me. What I missed, I'm sure I missed, but I'm not too unhappy about what I did. I've had the opportunity to screw up in all kinds of things, not just in that one career!



"One of my dog pictures," says Tim of his last feature to date, *THE DARING DOBERMANS* (1973). Here, he ministers to one of his not-so-shaggy costars.



© 1973 Dimension Pictures Inc.

## KEVIN CONROY

Continued from page 17

**SS:** How long has it taken to put the BATMAN series together?

**KC:** This has been a huge project; we've been doing this for almost two years!

**SS:** You sound surprised.

**KC:** I am! Most of the recording was done before it started airing, 'cause we record first, and then it goes to the graphics people and it's painted.

**SS:** So the artists have the soundtrack . . .

**KC:** Yeah, they have the soundtrack. Then it comes back from looping, of heightened sounds and extra screams—you know, sounds that they need to fill out the scenes that we didn't record. We're still looping; there's still a lot left to loop. It's a really long process.

**SS:** Some actors on animated shows find themselves extravagantly acting out the part when they're taping.

**KC:** Oh, definitely. I find it hard to just sit there like a lump and have my voice do all the acting. The problem comes when you're acting it out, wildly throwing your hands around, and you bang the microphone. Then you have to start all over again. You can't make any noise! So, you see us, we're throwing our hands around and making all these faces, but without making any noise. (Laughs)

**SS:** Hasn't Adam West, who played Batman in the 60s series, guest-starred?

**KC:** Oh, yeah, he came in and did a voice. What a nice man; it was a real pleasure working with him.

**SS:** Will he be in more episodes?

**KC:** Not in the first 65. I think he just came in once.

**SS:** It's good to have West involved with the Caped Crusader again, especially in such a quality series.

**KC:** You know, enormous care goes into BATMAN; I mean, there's nothing casual about it at all. One interviewer asked me whether people were concerned with the violence, and I said, "Look, most everyone involved in this program has kids, and they're all very concerned about what their kids watch." That's why you never see any graphic violence in them. It's very dramatic, but you never see anybody killed, or anything like that.

**SS:** That care certainly shows. There's an episode in which a villain falls out of a dirigible and lands in a tree!

**KC:** I know what you're talking about. Everyone lands in water, trees. If they hit the ground, you hear them groan. They're really not dead. In BATMAN RETURNS, I hated the moment when the Ice Princess was thrown off that building. It violated the contract between the audience and the filmmakers. You're watching, and

you just don't expect someone to get killed. It's much too violent.

**SS:** Still, the series isn't too timid. You can go too far, sometimes, protecting children when they don't need protection.


**KC:** As I've said, they're much more sophisticated, now. If you talk down to them, you're going to lose them.

## LOREN LESTER

Continued from page 18

**SS:** Before the series, were you familiar with Batman? Were you a fan at all?

**LL:** I was such a fanatic about the TV series when I was a kid; I was fanatical. I had in my room a nightstand, which I called the Batman Stand, which was covered with everything Batman. I eventually had to buy another nightstand to hold them. I had Batman toys, I had the belt with the gun in it, and the Bat cuffs. And the parachute: There was a Batman with a parachute; you would throw it up in the air and he would land with his parachute. Anything related to Batman, my parents were wonderful enough to buy for me. Now I look back on that TV show, and I didn't realize how adult and tongue-in-cheek it was. I took it so seriously! It's a lot of fun, now, to watch it as an adult, because it's very campy. Intentionally so.



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## GIFT OF GAB

*Continued from page 25*

On September 25, 1934, Universal's *GIFT OF GAB* opened at New York's Rialto Theatre. *Variety* reported

*GIFT OF GAB* isn't a good picture, but will do okay at the box office. That legion of marquee names should just about draw every type of audience. . . . Save for Lowe and Miss Stuart, who are the romantic principals, the rest are in for bits; so much so that many an important stage, screen and radio name is made a stooge of and subordinated to the slipshod, sum total affair. . . . So much song stuff, *GIFT OF GAB* evolves into an elongated short. . . . But all these analytical shortcomings will probably go by the boards in view of the star-studded roster of marquee names which are certain to pull 'em in.

*GIFT OF GAB* soon disappeared, a curiosity of the Laemmle era, which toppled in 1936. It never played on television, for vague "legal reasons." The movie puzzled historians. Some mistook the PR shots that Universal took of Karloff and Lugosi in tuxedos in 1932 as their *GIFT OF GAB* sequence; others confused it with Columbia's 1934 *SCREEN SNAPSHOTS* #11, in which Boris and Bela play chess to see who will lead the parade at the Film Stars' Frolic. Inevitably, the film began turning up in Three Stooges filmographies compiled by writers who had never beheld Pintz, Mintz, and Blintz.

However, for a time, a print of *GIFT OF GAB* was in the library of a film historian/writer whose work is well-known to fans of the horror genre. In July 1974, the historian ran the film for a New York film society, complete with notes. Five years later, a thief broke into his home and stole, among other things, the print of *GIFT OF GAB*.

The long-lost movie has remained mysteriously elusive ever since. Many wonder: Why seek a creaky old curio, which, by most evidence, sounds like a pretty painful 70 minutes?

Personally, as a Karloff and Lugosi zealot, I've always been fascinated by the candid stills of Boris and Bela in *GIFT OF GAB*. For all their rivalry, for all the tragedy finally created by that rivalry, there's a wonderful warmth in those shots of the Horror Kings: relaxed, happy, fresh from the hit of *THE BLACK CAT*, and smiling at each other. For a glimpse of that happiness in those palmy days, even in a "mellerette," *GIFT OF GAB* would be welcome on my video shelf as well as those of many others who love the legend of Karloff and Lugosi.

So, if that thief who broke into the historian's house in 1979 is out there, reading this, and feels a pang of conscience . . . or if some ascetic film collector who spends his days and nights guarding his print of *GIFT OF GAB* sees this feature, and decides to share his good fortune . . . or, maybe, if Universal City, California, gets curious about *GIFT OF GAB* and sends an official searcher into its underground (and undoubtedly haunted)

## GIFT OF GAB

### Credits

Studio: Universal. Producer: Carl Laemmle, Jr. Director: Karl Freund. Associate Producer/Dialogue Director/Screenplay Writer: Rian James. Story: Jerry Wald and Philip G. Epstein. Adaptation: Lou Breslow. Cinematography: George Robinson and Harold Wenstrom. Editor: Ray Curtiss. Art Director: David Garber. Special Photography: John P. Fulton. Music Director: Edward Ward. Gowns: Vera West.

### Cast

Edmund Lowe (Gabney), Gloria Stuart (Barbara Kelton), Alice White (Margot), Victor Moore (Col. Horace Trivers), Hugh O'Connell (Patsy), Douglas Fowley (Mack), Helen Vinson (Nurse), Tom Hanlon (Announcer), Henry Armetta (Janitor), Andy Devine (McDougal the Waiter), Marion (Peanuts) Byron (Telephone Girl), Sterling Holloway (Sound Effects Man), Edwin Maxwell (Norton, President of WGAB Radio), The Three Stooges: Sid Walker (Pintz), John "Skins" Miller (Mintz), Jack Harling (Blintz), Maurice Black (Auction Room Owner), Tammany Young (Mug), James Flavin (Alumni President), Billy Barty (Baby), Florence Enright (Mother), Dick Elliott (Father), Warner Richmond (Cop), Radio Guest Stars: Phil Baker, Ruth Etting, Ethel Waters, Gene Austin, Gus Arnheim, The Beale Street Boys, The Downey Sisters, Winnie Shaw, Leighton Noble, Graham McNamee, Candy & Coco.

Universal Guests Stars in Radio Melodrama: **KARLOFF** (the Phantom); Bela Lugosi (the Apache); Paul Lukas (the Corpse); June Knight (the Corpse's Sweetheart); Chester Morris (Detective); Roger Pryor (Detective); Douglass Montgomery (Insurance Agent); Binnie Barnes (The Maid); Reporters: Sidney Skolsky, Radie Harris, Phil Scheur, Kirtley Baskette, Douglas Churchill, Allison Edwards, Dannie Thomas, Speed Kendall, Edwin Schallert, Eleanor Barnes, Hymie Fink, Jerry Hoffman, Jimmy Starr; B.I.I. Headwaiter of the Brown Derby (himself); Rian James (himself); Diane Corday (Mrs. Rian James) (Bit); Wallace Butterworth (Woolcott's Sound Effects Man); Charlie Gale (Reporter); Harry Turner (Norton's Assistant); Charles Sullivan and Dick Cramer (Mugs at Football Game); Dennis O'Keefe, Dale Van Sickel, Dave O'Brien, (Extras).

movie vault to seek a copy of the long-forsaken *GIFT OF GAB*, it would be very much appreciated.

Sometimes it takes so little to make a film historian happy.



*Gregory William Mank is the author of the books It's Alive! The Classic Cinema Saga of Frankenstein, The Hollywood Hissables, and Karloff and Lugosi. His new book, Hollywood Cauldron, will be published by McFarland in 1994.*

*Many thanks to Richard Bojarski for all his assistance on this story, and to Doug Norwine and Buddy Barnett.*

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**Hardly Hardy:** Parker Stevenson and Shawn Cassidy as *THE HARDY BOYS*.

## NOT HARDY ENOUGH

*Continued from page 57*

the local police chief the butt of Frank, Joe, and Chet's gentle ridicule and boyish pranks. (Gone, too, was the unfortunate sexual stereotyping and racism of the period—but, really, who approaches books written decades ago expecting to find the sometimes less-prejudiced attitudes of our present day?)

On the tube, the small-town, charmingly square Americana of Disney's Hardy Boys serials of the mid-50s (starring Tim Considine and Tommy Kirk) gave way to the teen idol ambience of the 1977 series starring Parker Stevenson (as Frank) and Shawn Cassidy (as Joe). Again, contemporizing the former "youths" hardly enlived them.

Still, you can't keep a good chum down. Recently, the original Hardy Boys marked a surprise return from the Land of the Whitewashed Dead. Applewood Books president Phil Zuckerman acquired the rights to reprint the first three Hardy Boys mysteries: *The Tower Treasure*, *The House on the Cliff*, and *The Secret of the Old Mill*. (Titian-topped Nancy Drew is back, too, in her first three adventures: *The Secret of the Old Clock*, *The Hidden Staircase*, and *The Bungalow Mystery*.) Once again, the brothers are off to Willowville on their motorcycles. Once again, that speed demon almost flattens them. Those who wish to join Frank and Joe at the very start of their long literary jaunt are advised to contact Applewood Books, distributed by The Globe Pequot Press, Chester, CT 06412. Those ghoulish enough to want to see what the lads look like since their fatal encounter in 1959 are hereby advised to turn elsewhere.

Now, if only Disney would release the real boys to tape.



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Quotations compiled by Sally Jane Gellert

The discovery of the Tower Mansion treasure was a Bayport sensation for almost a week—and a week is a long time for any sensation to last, even in Bayport.

FRANKLIN W. DIXON  
*The Tower Treasure*

If your hero must save the world, make him act human while he goes about it.

CLIVE CUSSLER  
"Writing the Suspense-Adventure Novel," *The Writer*

"Where do you find your amazing equanimity, Noel?"

"Like Little Jack Horner, I stick in my thumb and pull out aplomb."

GEORGE BAXT  
*The Noel Coward Murder Case*

Everybody has something to conceal.

DASHIELL HAMMETT  
*The Maltese Falcon*

"It's all right to help dad, but if there's no more excitement in it than delivering

papers I'd rather start in studying to be a lawyer and be done with it."

"Never mind, Frank," comforted his brother. "We may get a mystery all of our own to solve some day."

FRANKLIN W. DIXON  
*The Tower Treasure*

The detection of crime is a damnable occupation. A man who follows it will become a monster.

T. S. STRIBLING  
"Cricket," *Clues of the Caribees*

[Mr. Hardy] did not trust Chief Collig and Detective Smuff, who came to him only in emergencies and who usually took all the credit for themselves whenever he helped them out of their difficulties. He preferred to have the boys present as witnesses.

FRANKLIN W. DIXON  
*The Tower Treasure*

Murder. As a crime, it keeps the scribblers occupied, lines their pockets and, with luck, keeps one section of the reading

public wide-eyed and wondering. Fictitious murder, that is, . . . bloodless, painless and, above all else, quite "acceptable" murder; murder which, within the next two hundred pages, or so, will be solved with a certain gay panache.

JOHN WAINWRIGHT  
*A Ripple of Murders*

After my mother ordered lights out, I dived under the covers with my flashlight and my latest Dixon adventure. I always intended just to finish the chapter. But [Dixon] had this trick of ending a chapter in just the place where you had to read on. You couldn't leave Joe sweeping down the river to his certain death. You couldn't stop reading when the brothers were lost at sea or when a desperate criminal was pointing a revolver at the boys or when our heroes were trapped with the counterfeiting gang in a room with no escape.

WILLIAM TAPPLY  
Introduction, Applewood Books edition,  
*The Secret of the Old Mill*

Personally, Veda's convinced me that alligators have the right idea. They eat their young.

RANDAL MACDOUGALL  
*Mildred Pierce*

I never drink—wine.

BRAM STOKER  
*Dracula*

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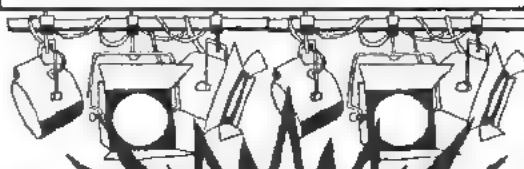
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HOLT OF THE SECRET SERVICE	JACK HOLT	15	1941
HURRICANE EXPRESS, THE	JOHN WAYNE	12	1932
JUNIOR G-MEN OF THE AIR	THE DEAD END KIDS	12	1942
JUNIOR G-MEN	THE DEAD END KIDS	12	1940
KING OF THE KONGO	WALTER MILLER	10	1929
KING OF THE WILD	WALTER MILLER	12	1930
LAST FRONTIER, THE	LON CHANEY JR.	12	1932
LAST OF THE MOHICANS	HARRY CAREY	12	1932
LAW OF THE WILD, THE	RIN-TIN-TIN JR.	12	1934
LIGHTNING BRYCE (SILENT)	JACK HOXE	15	1919
LIGHTNING WARRIOR, THE	RIN-TIN-TIN	12	1931
LONE DEFENDER, THE	RIN-TIN-TIN	12	1930
LONE RANGER RIDES AGAIN, THE	ROBERT LIVINGSTONE	15	1939
LONE RANGER, THE	LEE POWELL	15	1938
LOST CITY, THE	KANE RICHMOND	12	1935
LOST JUNGLE, THE	CLYDE BEATTY	12	1934
MASTER KEY, THE	MILBURN STONE	13	1945
MURDERER, THE	TOM MIX	15	1935
MYSTERY MOUNTAIN	KEN MAYNARD	12	1934
MYSTERY OF THE DOUBLE CROSS	MOLIE KING LEON BARRY	15	1917
MYSTERY SQUADRON	BOB STEELE	12	1933
MYSTERY TROOPER	ROBERT FRAZER	10	1931
NEW ADVENTURES OF TARZAN	HERMAN B. X	12	1935
OFFICER 444	BEN WILSON N. BERBER	10	1926
OREGON TRAIL, THE	JOHN MACK BROWN	15	1939
OVERLAND MAIL	LON CHANEY JR.	15	1942
PAINTED STALLION, THE	RAY "CRASH" CORRIGAN	12	1937
PERILS OF PAULINE (9 CHAP. AVAIL)	PEARL WHITE	9	1914
PERILS OF PAULINE	EVE Y. KNAPP	12	1934
PHANTOM CREEPS, THE	BELA LUGOSI	12	1939
PHANTOM EMPEROR	GENEAUTRY	12	1935
PHANTOM OF THE WEST	TOM TYLER	10	1930
QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE	REED HOWES	12	1935
RADAR MEN FROM THE MOON	GEORGE WALLACE	12	1952
RAIDERS OF GHOST CITY	DENNIS MOORE	13	1944
RETRURN OF CHANDU	BELA LUGOSI	12	1934
RAIDERS OF DEATH VALLEY	DICK FORAN	15	1941
ROBINSON CRUSOE OF CLIPPER ISLAND	MALA RALPH BYRD	14	1936
S.O.S. COAST GUARD	JACKIE COOPER	12	1937
SCOUTS TO THE RESCUE	THE DEAD END KIDS	12	1939
SEA RAIDERS	THE DEAD END KIDS	12	1941
SHADOW OF CHINA TOWN	BELA LUGOSI	15	1936
SHADOW OF THE EAGLE	JOHN WAYNE	12	1932
SIGN OF THE WOLF	REX LEASE	10	1931
SKY RAIDERS	DONALD WOODS	12	1941
TARZAN THE TIGER	FRANK MERRILL	15	1929
THREE MUSKETEERS, THE	JOHN WAYNE	12	1933
UNDERSEA KINGDOM	RAY "CRASH" CORRIGAN	12	1936
VAN SHING LEGION, THE	HARRY CAREY	12	1931
VIGILANTES ARE COMING, THE	ROBERT LIVINGSTONE	12	1936
WHISPERING SHADOW, THE	BELA LUGOSI	12	1933
WINNERS OF THE WEST	DICK FORAN	13	1940
WOLF DOG, THE	RIN-TIN-TIN JR.	12	1933
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ZORRO RIDES AGAIN	JOHN CARROLL	12	1937
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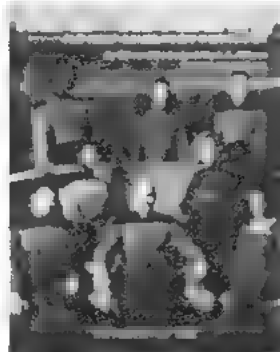
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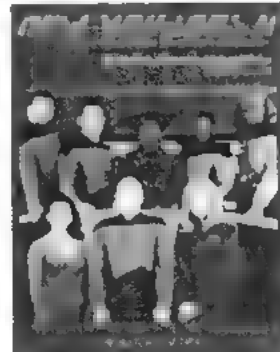
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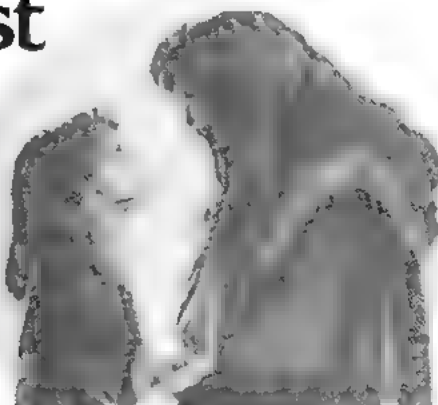


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THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE

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LON CHANEY · GEORGE MACREADY

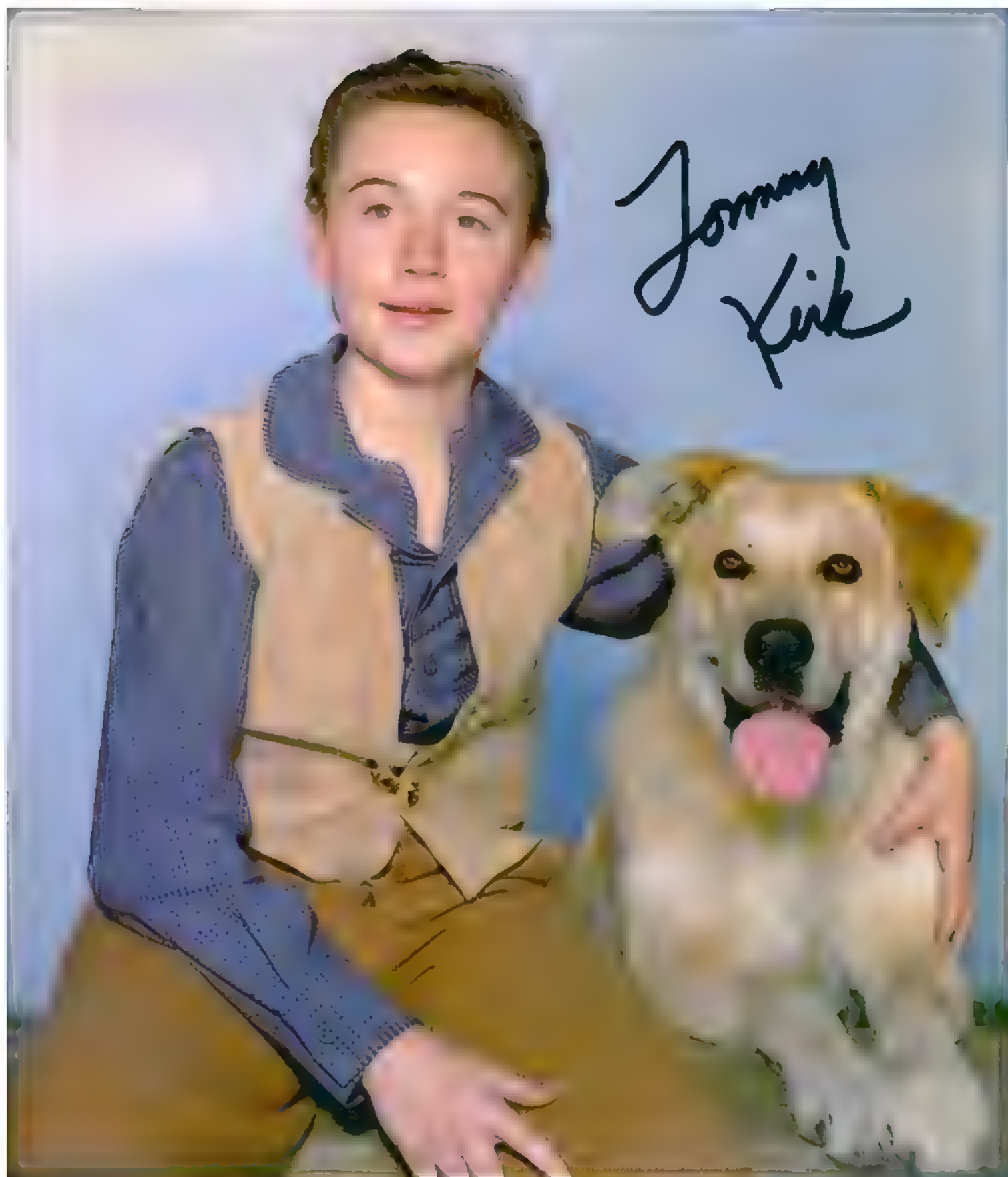
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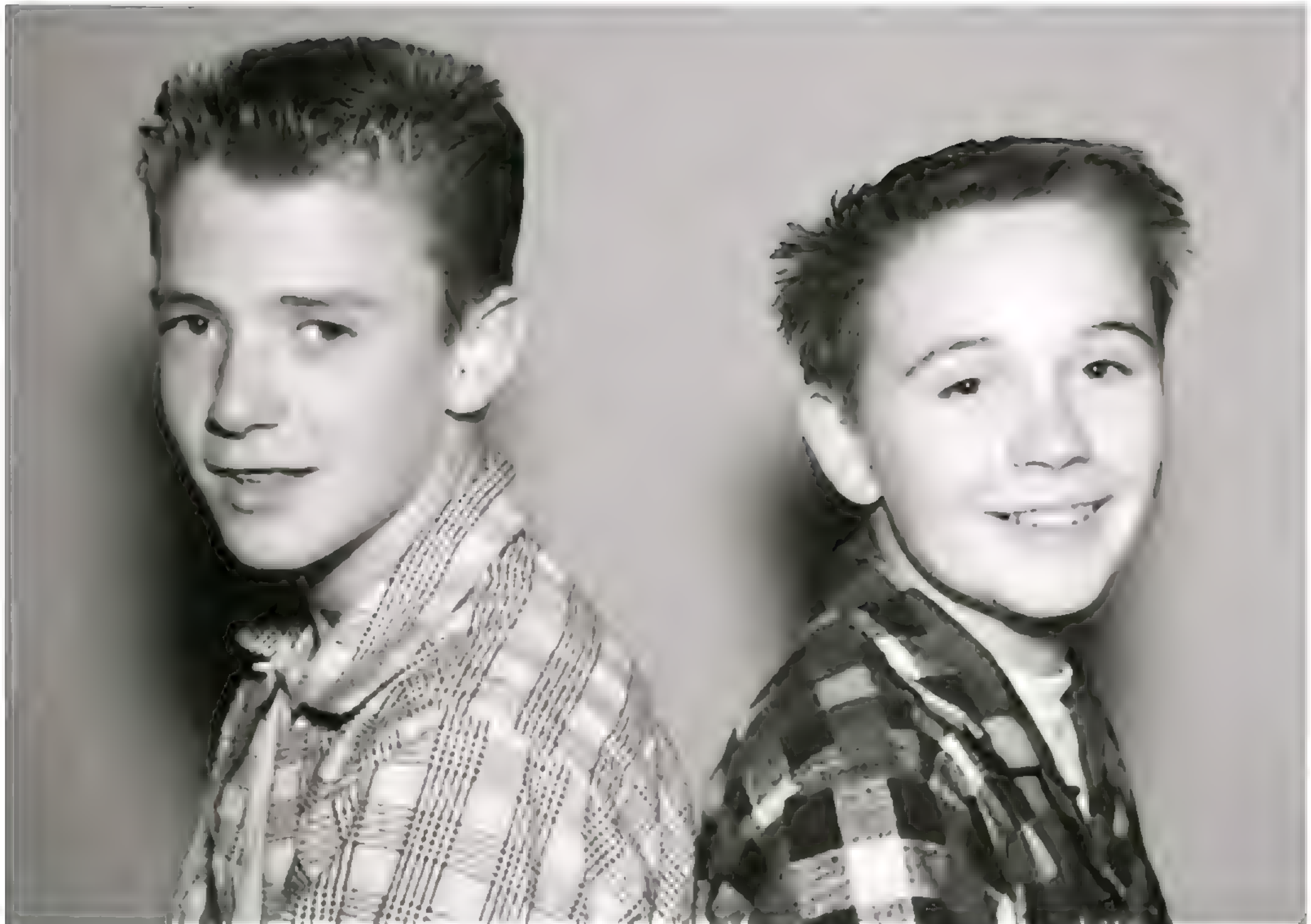
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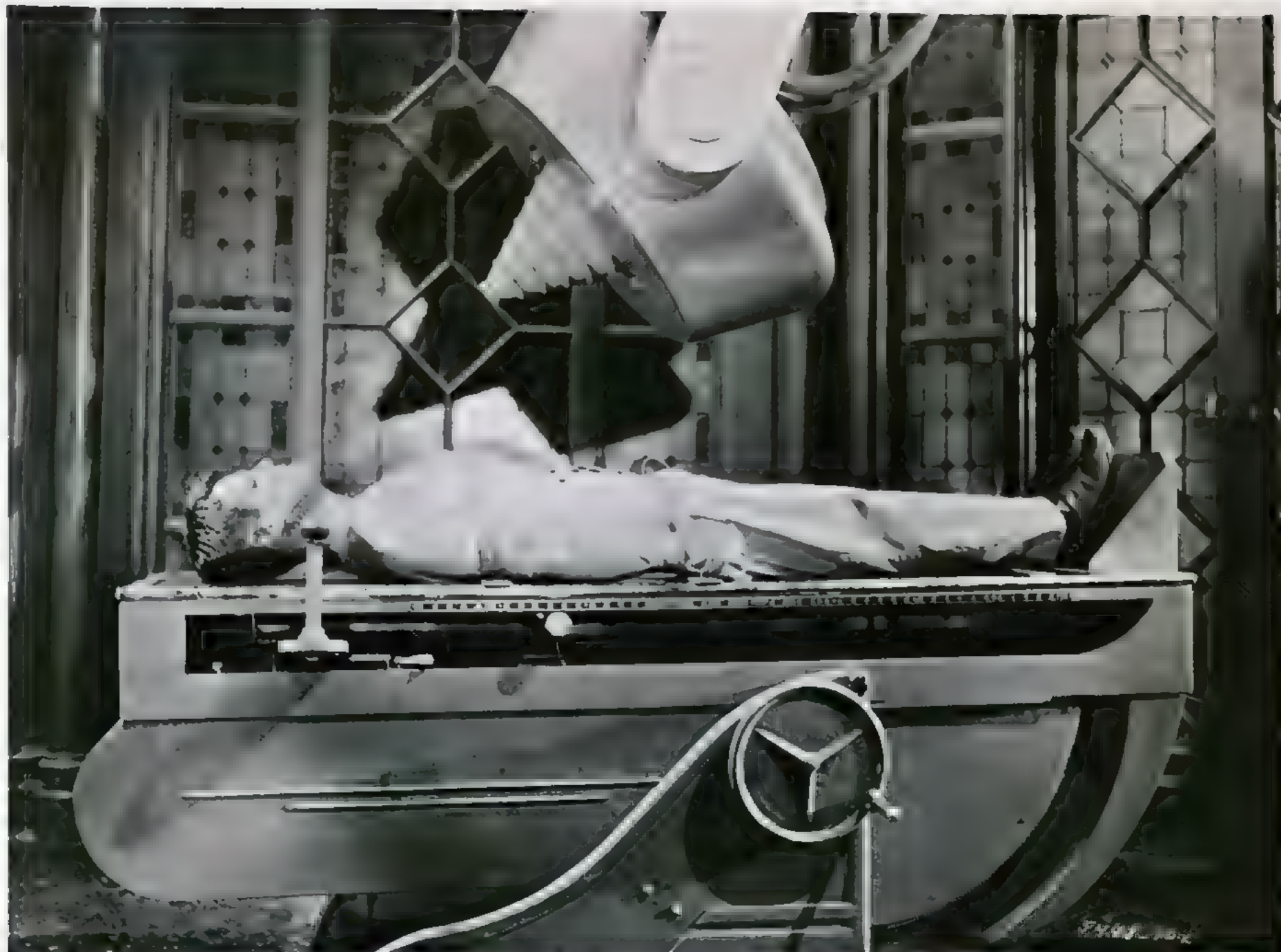










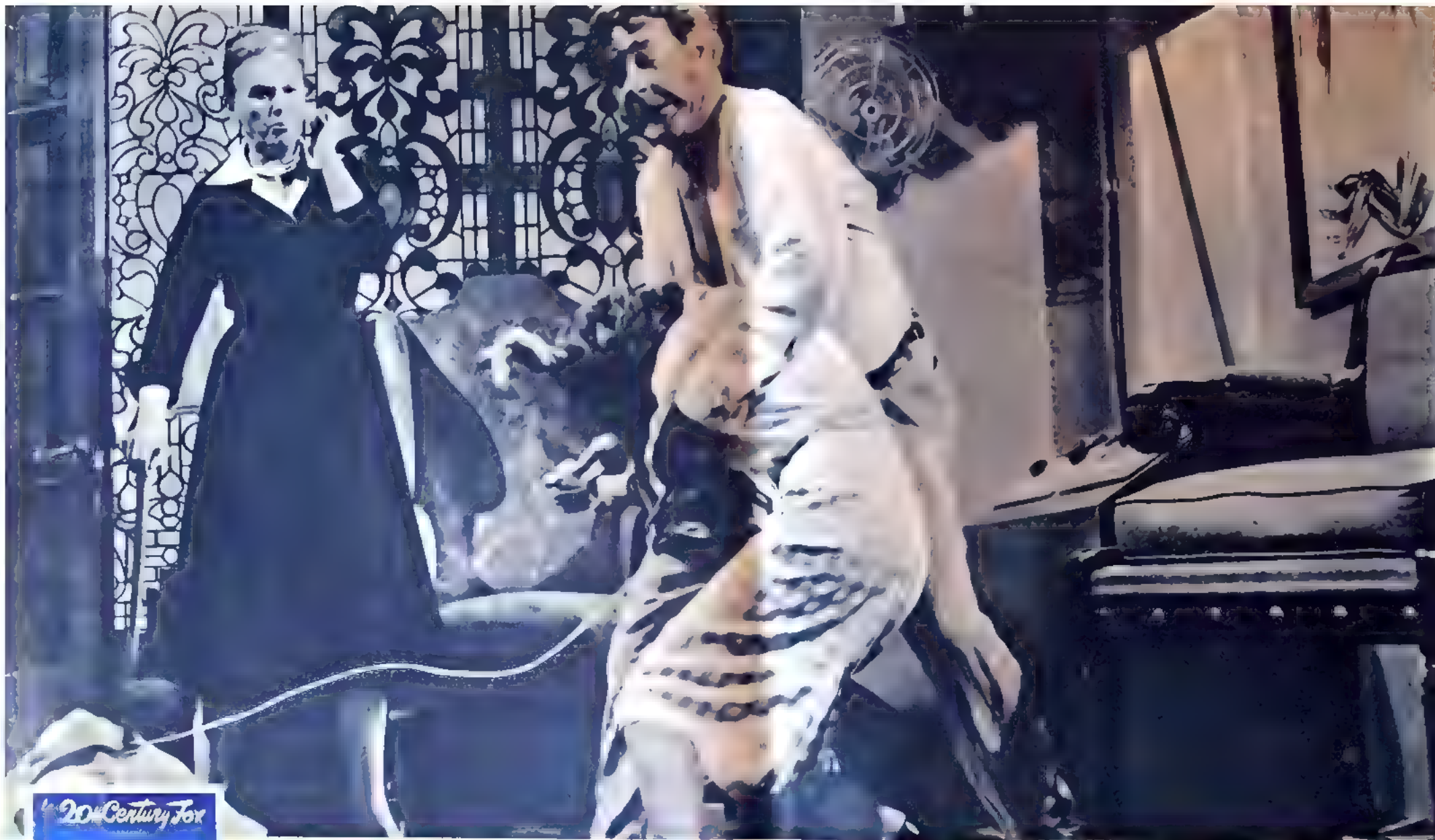


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Prodotto da JACK LEWOOD

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Sceneggiatura di ORVILLE H. HAMPTON  
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